

AIN SLEES

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

Oct. 1920
10 CENTS



THE WEEK-END GUEST
Marie Van Vorst



"for your soft cuffs, Tom"

"Why Nan, these are the real Kum-a-parts, I'll say you are up to the minute."

"But Tom, I might as well fuss up. I told the jeweler I wanted a wonderful gift for a very particular man - something entirely new, but useful. Kum-a-parts were really his recommendation."



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Accept no substitutes.

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Be Your Own Salesman and Save \$36—

New Oliver Typewriters for \$64

Let us send you a brand new Oliver Nine—the world-famous typewriter—for five days' free trial. Keep it or return it.

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**Prices
Cut to
Nearly
Half—
and Why**

With greater production and huge financial resources, The Oliver Typewriter Company is the pace setter.

Its officials seek to relieve the public of a useless tax. In the past, it has cost \$36 to sell typewriters through an expensive sales force—high rents for offices in many cities—and other frills. All are wasteful from an economic viewpoint. That is why Oliver Nines are shipped direct from the factory to the users—on free trial. This permits us to sell machines to you for \$64. You get the saving.

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13 cents a day

Easy payments of \$4 per month. This in addition to our cutting the price in two. Could any one go further? Yet we offer this free trial without obligation on your part. The plan is daring—but we believe discerning people will respond. This is the first time in history that a new, never-sold \$100 typewriter of the latest model has been offered at the price of cheaper or second-hand machines. It is cheaper to own than rent.

No money down

Simply send in the coupon properly filled in. There is no red tape—no collectors—no bother. Keep the Oliver for \$4 per month. Or return it. It is up to you. Mail the coupon today.

Canadian Price, \$82

The OLIVER
Typewriter Company

739 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

This is Our Offer

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TODAY**



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Name

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City..... State.....

Occupation or Business.....

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AINSLIE'S

The Magazine That Entertains

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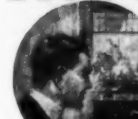
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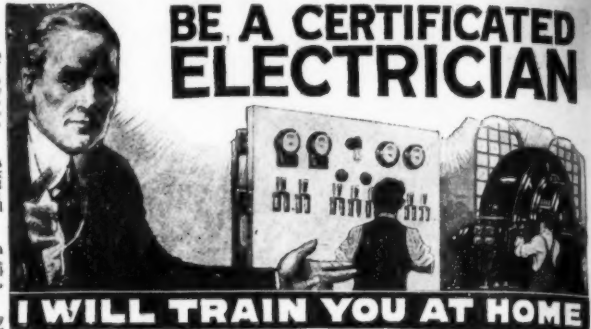
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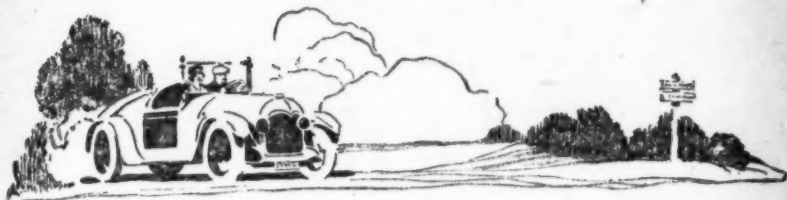
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XLVI.

DECEMBER, 1920.

No. 4



Doing Good

By Henry C. Rowland

Author of "The Apple of Discord," "Filling His Own Shoes," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE young man walked up and down the doctor's study with a step which one, watching, could scarcely have believed that of a solid mortal weighing some hundred and seventy pounds. It was more like the tread of Mercury, with his winged heels, or let us say Fokine. The nap of the new and heavy rug seemed scarcely disturbed by it, like a fairy skipping on the surface of dewy sward, and as the stepper talked in swift, syncopated phrases, gesturing with a hand which held a cigarette, there was a lilt to his voice and a sort of lyric diction as though he were reciting epic verse.

Behind the desk, leaning back in his heavy armchair, with a cigar of soft aromatic fragrance between his lips, the elder man, his father, listened to him, his fine face corrugated in lines of thoughtful wonder, almost disbelief. A quarter of a century of hard conscientious practice containing a volume of work staggering in amount if not in remuneration, had etched on Doctor Gladstone's features the record of emo-

tions and philosophies which were not only visible, but could be felt by the observer.

"I haven't let you know about it, dad, because it was so wonderful. I had to wait to tell you. It seemed profane to slap the big news into a telegram or flounder at it in a letter. It all happened so suddenly that it took my breath away and I'm just beginning to get it back. Seeing you steadies me, dear old dad—brings me back to earth."

His father nodded. "You'll quickly find your bearings, Jim. It never takes the young very long to adjust their minds to sudden fortune. They always expect it. They live in fairy tales, and are not surprised to find the rainbow's end and the pot of gold. It's different with the old. They are less surprised at calamity. But overwhelming fortune staggers them. They can't believe there's not some joker in it, some mistake. I had a patient once, an old lady, whose husband found a copper mine in his back yard when digging a grave to bury their old dog. He took millions out of it, but his wife could

never be persuaded that they could afford a trip to Europe."

Jim threw aside his cigarette. "Yes, sir, there were some old people like that down there. Even my old partner is having a hard time to get it through his head. He said, 'Of course I know it in my brain, boy, but somehow my actions can't seem to pick up.' It's not to be wondered at, dad, when you stop to think. He's been prospecting all his life, making a little at long intervals, and then like all those birds throwing it back into the ground. And here, now, all at once, we fall right on a big pool. Millions and millions and millions."

"Horace Greeley was right," said Doctor Gladstone. "So you sold out?"

"Yes, sir. It seemed to me that four millions was enough for any man."

"And what are you going to do now?"

"What would you advise, dad?"

Doctor Gladstone shook his head.

"Too big an order, Jim. Haven't you formed any idea, yourself?"

"Well, yes, dad. You see I look at it this way: Money I don't need. Business I don't like. Science leaves me cold, and talents I have none. Social achievement is mostly pleasure seeking, and that is neither my nature nor my ambition. But I've got a big debt to pay off."

"Debt?"

"Yes. Just that. A debt to the high gods, which is to say to mankind. I wouldn't state it to any one but you, dad, and even to you it makes me sound like a bit of a fool. But the fact is, I intend to devote my life to doing good."

"Charities?"

"Not exactly. Helping people—personally I want to be what the French call a *marchand de bonheur*—a dealer in happiness—helpful happiness. I'm going through the world, this part of it principally, having a perfectly good time on my way, and whenever I meet up with people who've had a raw deal, or

are up against it and need a leg up, I'll give it to them. I don't care whether they're good people or bad people, or whether it's one or a community. But the point is that they must be people whom I happen to run up against personally. What do you think of the idea?"

"It's not entirely a new one, Jim. That was, in fact, the fundamental principle of the Round Table, only King Arthur's knights did it with their swords instead of their check books. Then there was Don Quixote and a good many others, I imagine."

"Quite so, father. And the boys had a pretty good time, riding around doing it. And I intend to have a good time riding around doing it. Mind you, dad, there's none of the Light of Asia stuff in it at all. I haven't the slightest intention of giving my fortune in a lump to the poor and starving and starting out like Lord Buddha. I'm not trying to reform the world or make any sublime sacrifice. I'm merely going to devote my life and fortune to doing good."

Doctor Gladstone rolled his cigar in his lips and smiled. "It is all right in theory, Jim," said he, "but you've got to be mighty careful not to particularize. There's always the danger of running up against the one girl—and doing it all to her."

"Well, I've thought of that, too, of course. But if I should happen to meet that girl she'll be jolly well given to understand my idea, and that she's got to help. Dad, will you come along and help?"

His father smiled, then shook his head.

"I didn't think you would," said Jim, "and it's cheeky for me to ask you when you've been doing the same thing yourself for the last twenty-five years, and a lot better than I can ever hope to do it. Then I suppose I'll have to be

content with retaining you for counsel in this scheme of mine."

"That will be better, I think. You see, Jim, since your mother died, my practice has been my life, and I'd rather not change it for any other. When do you propose to start on your knight-errantry?"

"Just as soon as I can put my affairs in order, dad. I'm going to see Mr. Judson to-morrow and get everything salted down. Of course, dad, it's understood that you're to have carte blanche on anything that you might want to make things easier for you or your own private charities or anything of that sort."

"Of course, Jim. But now that there's no longer any need of considering your future, my own simple necessities are more than amply provided for." He laid down his cigar, leaned forward, clasped his hands, and looked at his son with a peculiar illumination of his fine face. "I might as well tell you, Jim, that your plan appeals to me very strongly. It is one which would be impossible to most men, and possibly not to be recommended, but I think that you have got the temperament to carry it through. Organized charities are necessary, just as organized government and laws and religion. It would be infinitely better if every man were to be his own arbiter, but that is the Utopian idea—the millennium. Nevertheless, when some individual has the sense and the resource, it would be wrong to hinder him. At any rate, the effort should increase his knowledge and philosophy and general evolution. So go to it, my boy, and God go with you!"

CHAPTER II.

Some philosopher has said, or if he has not, let me say it now, that the greatest value of a generous impulse lies in the possession of it.

Jim Gladstone was so filled with his

great idea that all other benefits to be derived from his huge and suddenly acquired fortune became immediately of lesser worth. Like all healthy, sanguine boys, he had pictured often what he would do under precisely such a condition, and because he was bred true to form and had inherited strong self-sacrificing traits from rugged, toiling pioneer ancestors, his imaginary dispensations had always taken some generous form. Now that the fact was an accomplished one and because he was clearheaded while having, as he had truthfully said, no especial talents or ambitions, he had, on his journey East, been able to crystallize a good working scheme for his benefactions.

Jim's first plan had contained a good deal of romantic glamour for himself. The knight-errant picture appealed to his youth with a sort of childish sense of magnificence—the plumed knight, cap-a-pie in burnished golden helmet and shining armor, with spurs of gold, with pennanted lance and sword Excalibur, shield-point device, riding forth astride his great war horse, and attendend by a squire befittingly equipped; the quest to right wrongs, defend the weak from the tyrannically strong, and with always that glowing, deeper fancy to succor virtue and beauty in distress. His motto might have been "*Ex recto decus*," and his passage marked by milestones of good deeds.

In accordance with the changed conditions of the world through successive ages, there would be a metamorphosis in his equipment. The shining armor might be replaced by a wardrobe of such clothes as are worn by the *matinée* hero in his careerings; the war horse by a latest model road car guaranteed to pass with ease through any brick garden wall; the squire, a faithful, devoted, and admiring chauffeur, if such rare bird exists; and Excalibur worn not in a scabbard but in an inside pocket of his tweed coat, and as his

father had said, in the shape of a check book on the Trust Company.

We find him, therefore, thus riding blithely on his way, a fortnight on his quest with no interesting adventure as yet presenting itself. His big car was such, as moving silently on its majestic way, might sow the seeds of bolshevism in the bosoms of ninety-nine-hundredths of us. His squire had so far left nothing to be desired, an elderly person of Hibernian origin with the engaging name of Terence O'Toole. Terence was in the secret. His family had been patients of Doctor Gladstone's for many years. Terence himself, a master mechanic and expert motor adjuster, had been laid off from work countless times for periodic sprees, and then laid on again because of a technical ability which amounted to an art. Finally he had become the doctor's chauffeur, and the doctor had given him to Jim a good deal as the master of an old country home might give to his son going forth upon a quest, a retainer of whom, whatever his temperamental defects, there could never be any question of whole-souled loyalty.

It is doubtful if Terence got the serious side of Jim's purpose at all. Jim, to him, was merely a young man of quality and wealth with a hobby which might last until something more interesting would turn up.

So far nothing of importance had turned up. Jim did not worry about this any more than might Sir Percival have worried because after a lapse of pleasant excursioning he had failed to discover a chalice which bore the least resemblance to the Holy Grail. Traveling easily, they had covered a good deal of New England, the Berkshires, and the White Mountains, and were now working down toward Boston. Jim, under pretext of exploiting all that region for automobile tours, had mixed freely with all sorts of people and gathered a great deal of useful knowledge

about its social and economic conditions. But he had been singularly struck by his lack of encounter with anybody who appeared to be in anything like approaching distress. On the contrary, the general air of prosperity seemed strikingly in contrast with all reports on the economic condition of the country, scarcity of labor, impossible wages, and general H. C. L. In the small towns the loungers appeared to be holding down the steps of the post office and general store, as had been the habits of their fathers. The farmers' boots reposed as usual on the railing of the front porch to act as a screen for the farmer who sat behind them comfortably on his lumbar vertebrae. There were a great many small automobiles buzzing in and out of these farms to lend an air of sufficiency which was supplemented by the white shoes and silk stockings of the rustic maidens.

No. Jim failed to see where any great amount of merit in his evolution could be acquired by showering benefits on this countryside. He was on the whole rather glad. Like a wise capitalist who keeps always a considerable bulk of his fortune in liquid form, his present object was less to invest in the doing-good market than to study it. He felt that he would be quite content to study it a long time if necessary before taking any active interest in it. Rolling about the charming region on his magic carpet was very pleasant, and having a distinct objective gave the pastime the dignity of reason. As a matter of fact he might have covered the whole United States in this way over a period of several years, and learned actually more of his great country, and the peculiar conditions confronting it, than is known to any political economist, and placed himself finally in that position, which probably no American occupies to-day—that of knowing his own country from one end to the other.

This in turn presented another big

idea. Why not know America? Why not in the course of his knight-errantry learn the whole United States? To paraphrase Kipling, "he had the time and he had the will and he had the money, too." Backed then by personal knowledge and that best of all information, which is not printed tiresomely and everlastingly, as the six wise men of Hindustan might have described the elephant, that comes of conversations in all quarters, there would be something for him to grapple. He swept around a curve of the road exalted by this thought and the power of the great fabric which he so easily controlled by the slightest touch of hand and foot.

"Look out, sir," said Terence. "Mind the kiddies."

The warning was unnecessary. Jim had already cut off his gas and put on the brake. A swarm of children were scattered over the road ahead, and their shrill pipings rose like the sound of "peepers" in a marsh. Drawn to the side of the road was a small motor bus rigged as a carryall with four wide seats and a protecting guard rail.

Jim came to a stop a little behind the vehicle beside which was standing a young man in blue denim overalls and a girl. Jim got down and, stepping to the girl, lifted his cap.

"Do you need any help?" he asked.

She turned, and he saw that his first impression had been correct. She was strikingly pretty in an intense and colorful way, but rather severe of expression with violet-blue eyes, blackly fringed, and features cleanly cut like those of an athlete trained too fine. Her mouth, though wide and with full red lips, was set at the least slant, and had a suggestion of sternness as she answered unsmilingly.

"No, thanks. We can manage, I think. You might take the driver on to the next place where there's a telephone, if you don't mind."

"I'd like to do more than that," Jim

answered. "Is your truck down and out?"

"Yes," she answered briefly. "Key-way of the shaft union ripped out."

"There's not much to do for that," said Jim, and he glanced up at the sky. "There's going to be a thunderstorm later. I can take a good many of the children to where you're going, and come back for the rest."

She appeared to hesitate. "Oh, well," she answered, "if you have plenty of time to spare."

"The rest of my life," Jim answered.

She raised her straight, black eyebrows. "Indeed?"

"Absolutely. I have no objective, and am in no hurry to get to it. My time is of no value unless I can be of some service to you or others."

"That sounds well, like many idle phrases of idle people. Then if you will be so kind, you might take my driver with as many of the children as you can safely carry, about six miles on to the John Phillips Memorial Home. The driver can come back with another truck and tow this one home."

"I can do even better," said Jim. "We will take out some of my duffel, load my car with all the children that it can carry, and the driver. He can come back with the truck and my man can bring back my car for the rest of us. It will be slow work towing this bus, and you might get stuck on a hill."

"Say, that's a good thought, Miss Dudley," said the girl's driver. "It's about a fifty-fifty chance that we can get up Turner's Hill."

The girl looked annoyed, then glanced at the sky, which was darkening in the west.

"You are very kind," said she reluctantly. "I suppose for the sake of the children I ought to consent."

Some of the youngsters had gathered about to listen, and it was apparent to Jim from their pale faces, meager little bodies, and city clothes, that they were

fresh from the town. Probably a party just met at the train and being taken out for a month's or fortnight's vacation. Without wasting more words he told Terence of the plan. They quickly unloaded the valises and a big well-stocked lunch box, and set this impedimenta on the roadside, the girl watching with a look of annoyance at being obliged to accept this aid from a strange cavalier of the road. Then Terence took his seat at the wheel, the other driver getting in behind, and about ten of the children were piled aboard.

"Why don't you drive yourself?" asked the girl.

"I'd rather wait here, if you don't mind. I've been driving all day and I'd be glad of the rest. My man is careful."

The car moved off in a clamor of shrill and joyful cries between those parting and those left behind. The latter immediately scattered through the pines on the side of the road, in quest of wild flowers and other treasure.

"Hadh't you better count 'em?" Jim asked. "Some might stray."

"There are nine left," Miss Dudley said. "There were to have been twenty, but one got ill at the last moment."

"Then we'd better herd them a little. They seem to be having a good time."

"Children always have a good time when they're given half a chance. Health and fun are the objects of this place of ours." She started to walk in the direction the children had taken, and Jim, without waiting for an invitation, kept at her elbow. He was rather puzzled and a little hurt at her lack of graciousness in accepting a favor which any decent person with a heart would immediately have offered. Yet he admired her tremendously. She was precisely the type of girl which had always most appealed to him, serious, evidently of purpose, and of generous, yet charming physical personality, a little above

medium height, nearly his own, full figured, but with a small round waist and pretty wrists and ankles. Her hair was almost black, but with a warm dusky color in it, and her very dark-blue eyes held a tender thoughtful expression as they followed the gambols of the children.

"Yours is a very splendid charity, Miss Dudley," he said.

"That is its aim. It is a wonder more people who have the means don't go in for it."

"A private one?"

"Yes—a personal one. The home is a memorial for an American officer who was killed at Château Thierry." Her blue eyes flashed him a questioning look.

"No. I wasn't there, to my everlasting regret," Jim answered. "They gave me a commission at Plattsburg, but my outfit was in England just ready to embark for France when the war blew up."

"Well, that wasn't your fault. Then I suppose you came back and resumed your busy life." Her eyebrows lifted a little.

"I certainly did. A chum of mine had told me a lot about the big oil strikes they were making in Texas. I had no profession and had inherited a few thousand, so I went down there."

"And struck it?"

"And struck it."

"Millions?"

"And then some."

She turned and their eyes met. It seemed to Jim that her high color had faded a little. The violet eyes darkened, and there was no question of their accusing gleam. It roused his sudden resentment.

"So you did the usual thing—bought a big car and a lot of clothes and a manservant and are now one of the great army of millionaire pleasure seekers."

"Let's call it adventure."

"It comes to the same thing, doesn't

it? Has it never occurred to you that there are certain responsibilities, moral obligations, attached to great wealth, especially when you haven't worked for it?"

"Why, yes," Jim answered, and added dryly, "once or twice I have thought of that."

"It's really worth thinking about." There was a bitter note in the girl's voice and she added almost with a cut, "In fact, I should say it was the only thing worth thinking about."

Jim's resentment was slowly rising to irritation. He failed to see that this girl, whose contempt for the class to which she took it for granted he belonged, had any right to assume that he must be a slacker in good works and in generous giving. One does not wear a uniform when he enlists in the army of philanthropy. For all she knew, he might be at that very moment feeding daily a thousand famine sufferers. As if the same idea had occurred to her, she asked abruptly: "Have your one or two thoughts on the subject resulted in anything so far?"

"Why, no," Jim answered. "I've scarcely got started."

"You've got started with the biggest and costliest car that one could buy, I imagine, and a manservant and very expensive and, I must admit, becoming clothes."

"Don't you think that's a natural start for a new-fledged millionaire?"

"Yes, more's the pity. But I can tell you one thing. Every day that passes will make it harder to give. Unless people with sudden fortunes start at once, the ice skims over their generosity. They quickly take it for granted, seem to accept their fortune as an endowment only due their special grace. They get to look upon themselves as superior beings, high above common clay. They feel under no more obligation to share their blessings than they

might to share their luxurious apartments with beggars."

"No doubt you're right," said Jim. "I hadn't quite thought of that." He stood and watched the spindle-legged children tumbling about on the scented carpet of pine needles. "Perhaps I ought to start something right off. Now this charity of yours. I might be permitted to help?"

She turned on him with a quick flush in her cheeks and a sparkle in her eyes.

"And then again you might not. As I've said already, this is entirely a personal memorial endowed and more or less managed by a rich girl whose former fiancé was killed on the field of honor not long before the end of the war. She had treated him unjustly, and he died without knowing that she really loved him."

"I see. Then it's rather less than a charity."

"Less?" Her eyes flashed, and through her parted lips Jim saw a double row of beautiful white teeth.

"I think so. You see, the motive which inspired her was less the desire to do good for good's sake than a sort of atonement—an expiation."

For a moment Jim was rather startled at the expression which crossed her face. It was as if he had offered her some injury, while at the same time he could see that he had given her an entirely new thought. She looked startled, shocked, chagrined.

"I hadn't thought of that," she muttered and, turning, walked quickly away to where some of the children were playing at a distance.

Jim, feeling that his close presence was unwelcome for the moment, strolled back to the truck, climbed up to the rear seat, lighted a cigarette, and sat smoking meditatively. It struck him there was a good deal of truth in what the girl said, and that if most people postponed their benefactions, they were indeed in danger of becoming in-

durated. Perhaps he was going wrongly about his scheme for doing good. "Give now," was after all the proper motto, just as "Enlist now." He knew a number of chaps who had postponed the latter until, to their everlasting regret, the act when it came had not got them anywhere.

He looked meditatively at the children, and it struck him that he would rather like to run a charity of that sort himself. One can make an awful mess of things by trying to help grown people, but it is absolutely impossible to go wrong in promoting the health and happiness of children. In doing things for children, he reflected, one is only giving them their own. Miss Dudley was leaning against a pine, her back to him, watching her charges. She made a charming picture to Jim's eyes, though many young men critical of feminine beauty might have found her proportions too matronly. She was one of those alluring types in which the mother appears to be awaiting the child—a potential mother—just as Jim on leaving Plattsburg had been a potential soldier, for a soldier is scarcely a soldier until his first fight, nor can a woman possibly be a mother until her first child. He wondered why she should have been so upset by his statement that the charity in which her services were enlisted was less than a charity because it had not been inspired purely by the desire of doing good. It never occurred to him for some reason that she herself might be the benefactress. He had immediately visualized this young woman as a sort of melancholy Hebe, who probably passed her time between repining and driving out in a black limousine to inspect her institution in a sort of lachrymose and martyred way.

Jim finished his cigarette, and at that moment Miss Dudley turned from the tree against which she had been leaning, dryadlike, and walked slowly back

toward the road. Jim noticed then that the promised storm was not very far away and, although there was no sound of thunder, the blackness of the sky in the northwest had intensified and mounted. He got down from the seat on the truck.

"Might be getting the children together," he suggested. "Terence ought to be back at any moment. My first millionaire's indulgence should do those twelve miles easily in half an hour."

Miss Dudley nodded. "It's going to storm," said she, and added with the faintest flicker of a smile: "After all newmade millionaires sometimes have their uses."

"I've been thinking about what you said, Miss Dudley. You're right. I'm going to start something in the philanthropic line right off."

"I've been thinking about what you said," she answered. "You're right. A charity can be as selfish as anything else, when its motive is selfish."

"Well," said Jim, "after all, the motive doesn't matter such a lot, does it, if you get results? Look at those kids, for instance. See the good time they're having. What difference does it make whether this rich girl that runs the kid ranch does it to salve her conscience or ease her grief or just as in the old days when her lord knight was killed in battle my lady went into a convent and gave her estates to the poor. The good is done just the same and, taking it from a humanitarian point of view, the proportion works out pretty well of people made happy as compared to one whose happiness is gone. But you're right. I think I'll stop my joy riding and start in doing good."

This brought him a smile. It was not much of a smile, but its intention was good, and Jim was astonished to see how it lightened and made radiant a face which he had already decided was the most disturbing which he had ever seen.

"I think perhaps you've started already," said she.

"In that case," said Jim, "my ride has got me something that I was out for."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you see," he began, when his speech was interrupted. The stillness was broken by the hoarse grunt of the big roadster, which swept around the curve, slowed, passed slowly, backed into the pine grove and turned. Terence's lined, good-humored face beamed down at Jim from under the chauffeur's cap, which was wedged over a cluster of grizzled curls.

"The childer are all delivered F. O. B., sor," said he. "We had best be gone quick. The storm is comin' up fast. Billy, the driver, is not comin' back. I told him he could never tow this bus up them hills and 'twould be far easier to come to-morrow and do his repair work where she sets and take her in under her own power. 'Tis no great job, as he can shift the part of the other truck."

The children were quickly loaded aboard, the luggage attached to the running board and behind, and thus heavily weighted the big car moved off, soon to reach the John Phillips Memorial Home. To the passer-by it presented such an aspect as it may have done for the past forty years, that of a fine, old, prosperous, well-kept New England farm. Here the passengers were deposited and, after a few brief words of thanks from Miss Dudley, Jim continued on his quest.

CHAPTER III.

"A foine philanthropy that, sor," said Terence.

"It sure is. Wonder who supports it. I didn't think to ask."

"But 'tis the young lady has just got down, sor."

"The deuce you say."

"None other, sir," and Terence proceeded to impart information about the charity furnished by the driver of the truck. Listening to him rather absently, Jim had driven a couple of miles when in the rapidly approaching gloom he saw the figure of a woman ahead, walking in the same direction and carrying what seemed to be a basket of provisions. Although the storm appeared soon to break, so that he was anxious to reach the next town with all dispatch, this very fact in his capacity of knight-errant made it obligatory for him to slow and offer the wayfarer a lift. She proved to be a pretty young woman of distinctly urban type, rather blond and smartly dressed for the locality, but as she looked up her face showed a sudden and, as it seemed to Jim, uncalled-for alarm. Jim raised his cap.

"Can't I set you on your way?" he asked in his pleasant voice. "The storm's going to break at any moment."

The startled look gave way to one of relief. Terence sprang briskly down and, as the luggage had been piled back into the rear of the car, he opened the door at Jim's side.

"Step in here, ma'am," said he. "I can stow myself wit' the duffel, and there is scant time to spare."

"You are awfully kind," said the girl, for she was scarcely more than that. "I'm almost home and I'm afraid of thunderstorms." The rumble of thunder was now almost constant.

She seated herself and, then as Jim started ahead to his intense astonishment and dismay, she leaned suddenly forward, buried her face in her hands, and began to sob violently. Jim, attributing this hysterical outburst to a constitutional fear of thunderstorms, tried to comfort her.

"Don't be frightened," said he. "We'll get there before it breaks."

"Oh, it's not that," she sobbed. "I'm—I'm not used to having people kind to me, and this big car reminds me of

my life before I ran away to get married."

A pathetic story now came pouring forth in gasping, incoherent words. It appeared that her father had been a prosperous Western farmer. She had eloped with the chauffeur, and her father had severed all paternal relations. Her husband soon ill treated her. He had ruined his health in dissipation and finally, out of work and at the end of their resources, she had persuaded him to go to a small farm which he had inherited from his grandfather and which for a span of years had been abandoned.

They were living there in utter wretchedness, the husband too weak physically and morally to do any work. She had sold such poor equipment as the place contained and now, as a last resort, at the end of her courage and resource, she had been to the Children's Home to "borrow" some provisions. It did not matter as the place was to be sold next week for what it would bring.

Jim listened to this tragic story with a sort of eagerness. Here, following hot upon his discussion with Miss Dudley, was the opportunity for doing good immediately presented; the chance to reconstruct two lives. The man no doubt was worthless, but might still be made to fit in somewhere. The woman was young, pretty, and possessed apparently of an uncommon loyalty and devotion. It was precisely for such cases that his idea of knight-errantry had been formed, though a ruined community would have been more in proportion for his ability to succor.

He did not say much until she had finished her tale, but driving slowly, regardless of the storm which suggested the approaching end of the world, he was quickly forming his plans.

"Our miserable old place is just around this bend ahead," said she. "I've delayed you awfully. I'm so sorry."

"It doesn't matter, Mrs. King," said

Jim, for she had told him her name. "I'd rather not drive through the woods in what looks like an approaching cyclone. Have you a barn or shed in which I can put the car?"

"Oh, yes," she answered eagerly. "The barn is in fairly good condition. There's an old car in there that won't go. I held on to that hoping that Will might be able to fix it up enough to get us somewhere."

"Then I'll beg your hospitality, maybe for the night."

"But there's really no decent place to sleep."

"That's the least of our cares. We're both good scouts and we've got our rugs. Besides, I want to talk to your husband. I may be able to help you out of this mess."

Her answer was checked by their arriving in front of the dilapidated old place, which in the dim, baleful light of the approaching storm was enough to draw a shudder from a tramp. It was pitifully battered, did not look habitable, and probably was not, except in spots. Windows were broken, shutters off or dangling from one hinge, and threatening to flap forlornly in a gust, striking down through the big trees. They bumped over a broken culvert and drove around to the barn, the doors of which were open.

The girl got down and led the way to the house, Terence following with Mrs. King's basket of provisions and their own luncheon box with its varied delicacies. As they approached the house a man came out of the kitchen door and stood staring at them. He looked to be thirty, and it struck Jim that he was rather well dressed for a person in such desperate circumstances.

He appeared precisely what the girl had described him—a worthless chauffeur, too lazy to work, and with no heart to do so. Yet he was clean and of a type which is perhaps the most frequent of all others, medium size,

rather thin, with a face partly impudent, partly cringing and self-effacing with no distinguishing traits or features.

Mrs. King quickly explained the situation. Then he became all affability and desire to please. Jim saw that there would be no obstacle here placed in his scheme of doing good.

"The old house leaks like a sieve, and there's nothing much to sleep on," said he, "but I guess we can fix up something. Looks like we were going to have a Kansas twister. Pretty bad on the road such a night as this. Tree might blow down on you or something."

The darkness came almost immediately. They went into the kitchen and lighted a lamp. Terence, an old campaigner, laid out their supplies. "No use to start a fire, ma'am," said he. "We can fix up a nice cold supper."

"Terence and I like to picnic on the side of the road," said Jim, "and we always keep the old boat well supplied."

There was no question of this. Mrs. King and her husband excused themselves to see what could be done about beds, and when they had gone out, Jim said to Terence:

"Looks as though I'd turned up something in the doing-good line, old scout."

"Maybe so, sor. The lady must have qualities to stand the like of this for the sake of a felly who has all the earmarks of a worthless vagabond."

"He doesn't look like much, I'll admit; but after all there's no use helping worthy folk who can help themselves."

"Well, that is a question, sor. Does it not strike you that the lady herself does not ring quite true? I misdoubt they are much good, the two of them."

"Well, they are in distress, and that's the main thing," said Jim. "I suppose there are lots of helpless people like that who have to be carried along by the stronger ones. They might be made

to fit in somewhere, though, if one were to take the trouble, and just now that is my job."

Mr. and Mrs. King returned to say that there were two rooms fairly habitable in different parts of the house, though the mattresses were scarcely fit to be slept upon, but with the steamer rugs might be managed. Terence had spread the table with delicacies, finding it unnecessary to draw upon Mrs. King's provisions, and they were making their supper when the storm broke. It proved as Jim had expected, a small local cyclone, under which the old house, though protected by the trees, shuddered to the rotten core of its ancient timbers. Branches were whirled down, and in the midst of the turmoil they heard a crash which sounded as though a tree had fallen. It would indeed have been dangerous to drive over the road that night in that wooded section.

During the course of the storm and after it the talk was of things in general. The host and hostess rather pleased Jim by refraining to say much about their misfortune, nor did he press them. There would be time enough for that in the morning, when he intended to go into their affairs in greater detail. It was dreary with a single lamp, but Terence fetched the electric lanterns which they carried on the car for camping purposes or repairs at night—the battery sort. Also the roll of traveling rugs with which in some fashion he made up the shabby beds. Tired by the day's run they said good night and went to their rooms in different parts of the house which King showed them.

The bright, early morning sun was stealing through Jim's open window when he was awakened by an astonishing uproar of Hibernian profanity.

He sat up in his pajamas and rubbed his eyes. Somewhere outside the voice of Terence was bawling like the Bull of Bashan. Jim sprang from his rickety

bed, risking its final destruction. He looked out of the window, but could see only a rocky weed-grown pasture and some gnarled old apples trees. Down below Terence was filling the air with imprecations. Scarcely knowing what to think Jim turned to get into his clothes. But there were no clothes. The rickety chair beside the door on which he had thrown them was naked of one single article of apparel.

Shocked at this discovery, Jim rushed out and to the head of the stairs, noticing as he did so that there were puddles of water on the floor of the hall.

"Terence!" he called. "What the devil——"

"You have said it, sor," roared Terence.

"My clothes are gone."

"And mine, sor—and the car, and all of our gear, and with it Mr. and Mrs. King that you were going to help. They do not need it, sor, they have helped themselves. They have made a get-away with all we had, barrin' only the number plates of the car, which they have kindly left on the barn floor, takin' those of the old car. There is nothin' the matter with that same flivver except that they have taken the carburetor. The worse of it is we are any God's distance from nowhere and be like the wires all down from the storm. I misdoubt we shall ever see that fine new boat of ours ever again, sor. The nearest place is the Childer's Home, and that five miles away."

Two hours later, as Miss Dudley was breakfasting, one of the children came rushing in to tell her that the nice young man who had brought them there the day before was outside playing Indian, barefooted, and in a blanket. Not quite understanding this message, Miss Dudley went out to investigate, when, to her considerable astonishment, she discovered the information to be

exact. On the broad veranda, a later addition to the old but well-built house, Jim, in bare feet and a light plaid Yeager traveling rug, was hopping round and round, redskin fashion to the huge if rather scandalized delight of a group of the small passengers of the day before.

"Merciful heavens!" said Miss Dudley. "Have you gone suddenly mad?"

"Mad" is too strong a word for it," said Jim, "but I must admit to being considerably vexed. You see in me a recent millionaire reduced to the condition of a shipwrecked mariner, but rather worse, because the storm has not washed up any wreckage at all."

"I think I understand. You stopped in that abandoned farm about five miles down the road, and it was struck by lightning?"

"Wrong. It was not abandoned and it was not struck by lightning. It was occupied by Mrs. King, a very attractive young woman, and her husband."

"But nobody has lived there for years. It's to be sold at auction next week, and I shall probably buy it as it is such a picturesque old site and the land lies very nicely."

"It is still there in all its picturesque beauty. Just after leaving here I overtook on the road a young woman carrying a basket of provision and I gave her a lift. She told me a pathetic tale of how she and her husband, a consumptive, had been trying to live there and were about to be sold out. As my conversation with you was still fresh in my mind, I thought I saw my chance for doing good, before my doing-good machinery got stalled, as you suggested it might. So I took her up and went there and spent the night with the intention of being a god from the machine. I am. Or, to be more precise, I am a god without a machine. They were evidently short-sighted people, and thought they would rather have the machine than the god."

Miss Dudley stared at him with her pretty and generous mouth half open, then collapsed on a hammock in a paroxysm of the first laughter to which she had given way since receiving the news which had resulted in her giving up her life to doing good.

CHAPTER IV.

Theologists tell us that God never laughs, which is not surprising, all things considered. Hard-working country doctors who probably are the nearest images of their Creator in their intimate relations and care of mankind, for the same reason are seldom given to noisy mirth, and Doctor Gladstone was one of them.

But laugh he did, Homerically, when Jim had finished reciting his first adventure in doing good.

"I hope it hasn't discouraged you," said his father.

"No, sir!" said Jim. "All high endeavor must have its initial setbacks, I suppose. It may have proved useful in showing me that I set about the business in the wrong way. Also I am richer by the acquaintance of a very wonderful girl."

"Do you expect to see Miss Dudley again?"

"Not until I have something to report. She has no idea of my lofty purpose. She thinks that I was merely riding around the country for fun, and that I acted on a generous impulse which was the result of what she said to me. I now propose to go about it differently."

"As a tramp or peddler or something of the sort?"

"No doubt that would be a good plan, but, as I said in the beginning, I intend to get some fun out of this job as I go along. I never had the slightest intention to make a martyr of myself. My theory is that a man can go right ahead and enjoy himself in his own way

whether as a knight-errant or a bank president and yet do an enormous amount of good if he is careful not to miss a bet. I tried the knight-errant stuff and, instead of doing good, I got *done* good. Now I'm going at it as a sort of Ulysses."

"In a boat?"

"Yes, sir. I mean to buy a comfy little cruising boat with motor and sail and jog along the coast. You always get a diverse humanity in ports. I understand sail. Terence is an expert mechanic, and all we'll need will be a cook. Meantime, as part of the result of this last experience I contributed rather largely to several children charities both at home and abroad. I don't intend to let my income get ahead of me while I'm trying to do some first-hand work of my own."

"Well, better luck this time," said Doctor Gladstone.

"Thanks, dad, I'll try to hang onto my clothes this time, anyhow."

Not many days later a small sea-going, yawl-rigged boat with a compact and powerful motor might have been seen bowling across Massachusetts Bay before a fresh sou'wester which, for the moment, tempered the devitalizing heat ashore. She was heading in for the port of Boston under sail power alone, that the cabin might be more habitable that night. Jim had the wheel, while Terence, his duties light, reclined in the shade offered by the mainsail, smoking his bulldog pipe. Down below the clink of crockery indicated that the capable steward, Ito, was setting the table for supper.

"'Twill be hot in town to-morrow, sor," Terence opined. "Now God help the poor folk that have to pass their days in the shops and their nights in an attic room endurin' such a spell of weather as this."

The remark set Jim to thinking. It was a pretty awful fate he thought,

and one which must rouse a sort of desperation—to have to spend the day upon one's feet behind a counter serving the petty needs of even hotter and equally irritable customers. He was vaguely aware that many philanthropic schemes had been devised for relieving the sufferings—for in the hot spell this word was not too strong—of such toilers, but he could not remember having heard of such efforts being conducted on a considerable scale, or meeting with marked success. He mentioned this to Terence.

"'Tis no easy task to do for thim poor divils, sor, especially the gurrils. They scorn charity and they will not stand for restraint. They would rather have some bakin' barracks, swarmin' with flies the day and mosquitoes the night, and a hammock under a dried-up tree, and a beach littered with swill hard by the dance hall, and movie theater, and sody fountain, and a raft of cheap skates with sleeves rolled up, and free to go and come all hours of the day and night, than cool rooms and shady lawns and clean surroundings, and wholesome food with a matron thrown in to tell them when they should go to bed."

"All the same it seems as if it should be managed under sensible and reasonable direction. Of course if one keeps riding herd on the girls——"

"And if one does not, then they will be strayin' and trouble come of it and the place get a name which is not that of polite society."

"But if everything was free and nice they'd surely have sense enough to know it was a good thing and save their money, so they wouldn't mind a few light restrictions—provided, of course, they had amusements there."

"Some few might, sor, but those with sense are not the ones in need of such carin' for. It is the fools who suffer, and a fool is always the hardest to handle."

"But all of these big summer hotels have girl attendants, and they're under restrictions."

"Ah! but that is different, sor. They are makin' good money what with pay and tips. Then there's always the chance of flirtin' with the chauffeurs or rousin' the interest of some visitin' young gentleman like yourself. They are beholdin' to nobody, and not one of them but has not always in the back of her mind the movie star and the millionaire. For such a place as you name there will be but one way to hold them happy and in bounds."

"What's that?" asked Jim, who had great respect for the wisdom of his grizzled henchman, who came of this class and knew it in all its contradictory elements.

"To pay them, sor."

"To pay them? Good Lord! Pay them for passing a vacation in a nice place and every comfort and amusement?"

"Just that, sor—no less. To invent some light divertent task and pay them for doin' it."

"What sort of a task?"

"Waal, sor—that would need some thinkin'. For makin' daisy crowns or pickin' the flowers off century plants as fast as ever they bloomed or the like."

"How about letting them pay a little themselves?"

"That has been tried, but it does not work, because if they are payin' guests they won't listen to discipline. I misdoubt if such a scheme is feasible."

The Japanese announced that supper was ready, and the topic was dropped, Ito taking the wheel while Terence and Jim sat down to a delicious meal. A little later they came to anchor off the yacht club.

The following day came in rather like the fulfillment of an astronomic prophecy that the end of the world was at hand through the removal of atmosphere protecting it from solar heat, and

the summer was really only at its beginning. Jim had a luncheon engagement with a classmate at the Harvard Club, and, leaving there about half past two, the friend being a busy lawyer, it occurred to him that he would like to see what the conditions really were for the personnel of a big department store on such a day. He went into the largest department store in the city, which was cool in comparison with the outer world. But the girls looked white and drawn, less no doubt from the shop than from their surroundings on leaving it. In two or three other big stores the conditions were similar.

Then sighting a big cheap bazaar across the street he entered, and was enveloped in an atmosphere which struck immediately its sinister warning on one from outside. This was not entirely of heat, although the place, rather low of ceiling, was torrid enough and stuffy enough. But there was something else which can best be described as the exhalation of its stock in trade; for the most part, flimsy gimcracks, emanating the poison of dyestuffs and lead, and the arsenic of paint, and moth destroyer, and dust, rich in microbes, and a sort of felter from the thousands of breaths from which the toxic products had never been thoroughly expelled.

Jim, fresh from the salt air off the Cape, felt as if his head had been covered suddenly by a heap of dirty bedding. He gasped. Some pretext for entering was required, so he made his way to the hardware counter presided over by a rather pretty but anæmic girl who, though sufficiently well nourished, so far as physical proportions were concerned, had the clear diaphanous skin of a Styrian arsenic eater. Her eyes were large and blue, but as he spoke to her it struck Jim that their pupils were abnormally dilated.

In a listless, automatic way, she began to pick out the purchases he indicated from the various trays, and ap-

peared to have some difficulty in hearing his pleasantly pitched voice against the syncopated clatter of the piano, where a weary, poisoned girl was hammering out "Dardanella" for a pettish customer. And then as Jim waited for her to wrap up the things, her head began to sway as if overweighted by its heap of corn-colored hair, her knees buckled slowly under her, and she sank down in deliquescent way, like melting wax.

A little apathetic excitement prevailed; a sort of perfunctory, resigned disturbance which suggested nothing unusual about the circumstance. A sympathetic manageress brought some salts.

"It's no wonder," she said apologetically to Jim, "what with this terrible heat."

"Can't I take her home?" Jim asked. "I've got a taxi waiting outside."

The woman shot him a keen look which proved her examination satisfactory. She recognized immediately his type, and saw that here was no motive but good intention.

"You're very kind, sir," said she. "Then I'll send one of the other girls to look after her. She lives in Everett."

"I've got all the afternoon," said Jim. "My name is James Gladstone, and I'm cruising on a boat anchored off the yacht club."

The girl, whose name was Jennie Clark, presently revived enough to be led out to the taxi between Jim and her fellow worker, whom she called Ettie. Refreshed by the strong draft, Jennie soon began to take an active interest in Jim, who sat on the folding seat facing the two. As her color returned Jim was a little surprised to discover she was really a very pretty girl, with a pretty, slenderly rounded physique, and a face which, though wide, was appealing by reason of its large well-spaced eyes, a baby nose, and a gen-

erous mouth with dimples in both cheeks. Her teeth also were strong and regular. It struck Jim that she ought to be a good type for the screen. Ettie, her friend, had also her attractions, though of a different sort. She was dark, with the figure of a trim carrier pigeon, and, the rich coloring which in the Semitic race defies confinement and vitiated air.

"Feeling better?" Jim asked when they had traveled a block or two.

"Well, I'll say I *am*, and then some. Gee, but it was fierce in the store today. The S. P. C. A. orta chase out the animals and put a seal on the cage when it gets one hundred and forty proof."

"Then they'd have to put a cast-iron seal or asbestos or something," said Ettie. "Lead would run."

"It was pretty awful," said Jim. "When you go in it's like walking against poison gas. They ought to serve you out masks."

"You must have wanted that hardware pretty bad," said Jennie.

"I didn't want it at all. As a matter of fact, I've left it on the counter."

"Then what made you take a chance?" Ettie asked.

"I wanted to see what you people were up against."

"Well, you saw, didn't you? It's sure swell of you to take me home," said Jennie, opening the neck of her blouse still wider to expose a plump and creamy throat. "I only a been there a week and ain't trained down yet."

"I ain't been there long either," said Ettie. "You see, Mr. Gladstone, a lot of us salesladies haven't much idea about hoarding our kale. We hauled down good money working for the government during the war, but *once* it blew up we soon came down to——"

"Brass tacks, like I just sold you," said Jennie, with a faint smile. "It don't take many pairs of silk stockings and georgette waists to get us piker

profiteers, and now with the H. C. L. a girl's gotta swing to her job."

"If you can't get what you love, you gotta love what you get."

"All the same," said Jim, "I should think you might do better than that glue factory. A summer-hotel job or something of the sort."

"Waitin' at table and the like?" Jennie's melted form stiffened a little like cooling jelly. "That ain't our class."

"I beg your pardon," said Jim, "but lots of nice girls are doing it, students and others that want a cool job and a little money on the side."

"Well, it sounds all right, but I tried it when I was a kid and I soon got my fill. Some old hen of a housekeeper layin' down prison regulations and bein' at the beck and call of girls no better than us, but with rich folks."

"How about the movies?" Jim asked. "You are both bright, pretty girls, if you don't mind my saying so."

"Oh, you can't make us sore with that line of talk," Ettie answered, "but you need a grubstake to break into the movies, and then you ain't sure you'll connect. I had a friend who did the Cinderella act and saved her money and went out to California. She hung around the lot for about six weeks and picked up a ten-spot now and then and finally got a tryout. The director said, 'I'm afraid you've been going to the movies, and that you'll never act like yourself again.' She stopped writing not long after. Listen, Mr. Gladstone. There ain't any girl between the ages of eight and eighty that don't long for a chance to get in front of the camera. There's something wrong—many are called but few are chosen, as Billy Sunday said."

They talked a little longer about the possibility of the average working girl, and then Jim asked tentatively what they thought of country or beach rest houses for working girls where they might spend their vacations.

"That depends," said Ettie judiciously. "I've heard the summer camps weren't so bad, but us girls that have to stand behind a counter all day want something livelier."

"Jazz and dance halls and movies and things?"

"You said a mouthful. We want some fun and a chance to wear a few glad rags. We got fed up on khakis and bloomers during the war. Our trouble now ain't because of the war. It's because the war stopped."

They reached their destination presently and both thanked Jim effusively and with a sudden shyness which he was a little puzzled to account for.

"I'm the one that's under obligation," said Jim. "You've told me a lot that I wanted to know. I'm going to ask you to give me your names and addresses. I'd like to send you a little souvenir of our ride."

He rode back to the yacht club in a very thoughtful frame of mind. The problem of helping such girls as these was, he feared, a little beyond his knowledge and experience. As a matter of fact he knew very little about girls of any class. At school and college, athletics had claimed most of his spare time, and in vacations the woods and the water. He had taken a technical course in Harvard and, on graduating, his father had found him a position with an engineer's outfit doing reclamation work in Arizona. Two years had been spent thus when the war broke out and he had returned East to go to Plattsburg. Some months of training followed when his regiment had embarked and was in England at the signing of the armistice. On returning to be mustered out, Jim, lured by the stories of a brother officer, had joined the throng of oil seekers in Texas, and there with the aid of a little inheritance had achieved the lucky strike which made him several times a millionaire. Wherefore one may see that the femi-

nistic part of his education had been totally neglected. Yet after his talk with these two typical average shop-girls, he could not help but feel that if one could only find the secret of its operation, herein lay enormous possibilities for doing good.

CHAPTER V.

His little boat worked its way eastward leisurely, and a few days later, coming into Casco Bay, Terence announced that they were running short of gas. There was no particular object in going all the way up to Portland, and, discovering on the starboard bow what appeared to be a small summer colony, with an attractive hotel and a sheltered place to lie, Jim decided to fetch up there for the night. They came to anchor off a little steamboat landing where there was a gasoline tank, but as he and Terence got into the dinghy to go ashore, both were struck by the abandoned aspect of the place. Though it was still early in the season, it might have been expected to show a certain animation, especially as its general situation and appearance were more than commonly attractive and picturesque.

The hotel was small but of pleasing architecture, and the cottages adjoining it of bungalow style, bright and cheerful. The pretty stretch of sheltered beach promised every facility for bathing, with its casino flanked by tennis courts. There were a good many pine and other trees, while the coastline was typical of the most charming in the world, rugged rocks with sheltered little coves and no objectionable features.

Yet an air of abandonment prevailed. There were no gayly colored children or girls or parosols or small boats. It might have been the month of April for all the activity which prevailed.

"What's wrong with the place?" Jim asked.

"I could not say, sor," Terence answered, wrinkling his brow, "it should be filling up by now. But there is not so much as an old lady with a book, and they're the advance guard in these resorts."

As they drew up to the landing, a dejected-looking man came out of the boathouse and surveyed them sadly. Like most of the natives on that part of the coast, he was tall and square—shouldered and angular, with a bleak, high-featured face deeply tanned and lined; and he wore a battered yachting cap from under whose rim clustered hair as grizzled as that of Terence. Jim discovered also the four braid stripes of a master mariner on the sleeve of his blue pilot coat.

"Good evening, captain," said he. "Can we get about eighty gallons of gas?"

"All you want, sir. Take a hundred and I can give you a special price."

"Well, make it a hundred then." Jim got out of the boat which Terence made fast. "What's the matter with this place? Everybody gone fishing?"

"Wish they had, brother," answered the mariner, and looked seaward wistfully as if to visualize the return of a happy picnic party. "There's nothin' the matter with the place. The trouble's with me. This is as good a little hotel property as on the hull coast from Boston to Eastport."

"Hotel?" Jim asked.

"Yes, sir. It's all of a piece, hotel, casino, bowlin' alley, bungalows, and about a hundred and fifty acres here on the end of the p'int—good air, good water, big garden all planted, everything in good repair and ready for all hands to come aboard—and now I can't raise the money to swing it. Seems like bad luck, once she starts, don't know when to stop, like a gale from the nor'east."

Then followed a really pitiful story, to which Jim, unlike the wedding guest, was ready and willing and even eager

to give ear in his capacity as *marchand de bonheur*—dealer in good fortune.

Captain Fossett had retired from the sea ten years before, bought a summer hotel a few miles farther down the coast, and done a profitable business from the start. The year before, having received a good offer to take a new four-master laden with dry lumber from Boston to Buenos Aires, he had accepted it, counting on getting back in ample time to put his house in order for his summer's trade, as he had sailed the first of October. The ship was a smart sailor, but returning light had encountered head and baffling winds, and when, the first of June, he was still some hundreds of miles from home, his wife had gone ahead and lighted the furnace to dry out the place. A defective flue, a high northwest wind, and the very small insurance had resulted in ruin. Everything was lost—even to outbuildings and the garage.

At this moment the death of the proprietor of Piney Head, as this hotel colony was called, had put the property on the market at a bargain. Seeing a possible opportunity to retrieve his fortune Captain Fossett had scraped together what money he could and purchased it under heavy mortgage, counting on his own late clientele and the former clientele of Piney Head to fill the establishment and weather his first and critical season. But here he had not counted on the fact that the patrons of both resorts were mostly family folk of provident habits who made their plans for the summer well in advance. His own, learning of the fire, had reserved accommodations elsewhere; while those of Piney Head, being likewise advised that the place might not reopen, had done the same. So now, at the beginning of the season, the captain found himself under heavy obligations, with only a handful of guests in sight and no credit to see the season through.

"To hang on any longer means just runnin' more heavily in debt, and go busted in the end," said he. "The place is mortgaged up to the truck and I gotta deckload of new gear ordered and a full cargo of stores already aboard, and the store bill to be settled. I might just as well let them foreclose and be done with it."

"You say that everything's all ready to start?" Jim asked.

"Yes, sir. She's in full commission and all ready to hist the flag. I even got my crew of help."

"But you might fill up yet, especially in August."

"Ain't got the leeway. I was p'intin' too close to the wind hopin' somethin' might turn up. But money's awful tight and my credit's plum at an end. Even at the best I was doin' it on a shoe string and now she's parted. My regular clients have been with me for years, and wouldn't have minded paying me a month's advance in the circumstances, and that might have seen me through. But the way it stands I'm on the rocks."

Jim had been doing some rapid thinking. For one thing, here was precisely such a rare opportunity for doing good as had been the object of his quest, and for another the whole aspect of the place was extremely pleasing to him. It would be an admirable summer home for the sort of children's relief work which Miss Dudley was operating. But he had pondered a good deal on his shopgirl charity and disliked intensely to give up this idea without a trial, especially as in such a connection an idea recently had come into his head. A scheme which he thought would solve the problem of keeping his guests pleasantly and perhaps profitably employed.

Wherefore Captain Fossett, good honest sailorman, now received the surprise of his life; for the boyish-looking young man to whom he had been telling his troubles merely for the passing relief which comes through a sympa-

thetic listener, fastened him with his soft gray eyes and said in his pleasant boyish voice:

"Well, I guess you can carry on, captain. I'll take over the ship for this summer, anyhow, and put you in for skipper at let's say three hundred dollars a month."

The captain's lean jaw dropped. If, with his four-master driven on a lee shore, and his last anchor dragging, a benevolent whale had taken the hawser in his mouth and towed him safely to windward, he could not have been more astonished.

"What—what's that?" he gasped.

"Straight stuff," said Jim. "It just happens that I was on the lookout for a proposition like this, though not for hotel purposes. I've got a few million dollars lying idle that I'd like to see work a little, but if I'm going to carry out my plans, we've got to get some speed."

And speed was shown. Jim took up the mortgage the next morning and returned to Boston, leaving TERENCE to await his instructions. In town he got in touch immediately with certain philanthropic ladies of the Y. W. C. A. and other local-aid societies who undertook interviewing the management of such shops as that in which he had found Jennie and Ettie. These lines of operation started, he had a long and earnest consultation with a motion-picture producer who was himself in need of precisely such collaboration as Jim had to offer.

"I want you go down there," said Jim, "with your location man and photographer and scenario writer and look the ground over. It strikes me as an ideal set for a historic colonial American play—the landing of the Pilgrims or old times in the colonies with indentured men and cargoes of girls sent out to be married to the settlers on payment of

a hundred pounds of tobacco per; and Indian massacres; and pirates; and all that sort of thing. Make the best picture you can with the material you've got to work on and hire what supplementary stuff you need. Drag some old wreck off the flats and camouflage her like the *Golden Hope* or a French corvette or something, and sink her or burn her or blow her up. If the picture's any good it will help pay the expenses of the show. If it's not, it will be a start, and the girls will pass the word around. I'll have no trouble in keeping my place filled up and doing them some good."

What the producer may have thought of this as a business proposition it is unnecessary to record, but he was guaranteed against loss and, after having looked the ground over, became as enthusiastic about the idea as Jim himself. And all this time the good ladies were not idle, and the prospective guests, learning that they were to be given opportunity to perform before the camera, and later they might see their fair images cast upon the screen, stampeded the office for applications for vacation at Piney Head.

Through all this excitement Jim preserved his unruffled calm. His cruiser became a means of transportation and pleasure craft. He collaborated to some extent with the scenario writer and spent many days with the librarian of Portland and booksellers of Boston, getting hold of volumes on costumes of the period, war paint of different tribes, Senecas, Penobscots, Algonquins, Iroquois, and all the historic reference attending. A stucco blockhouse was erected on the moor, and log cabins, and a ducking pool, and whipping post, and stocks; and the play began to shape up as a sort of composite classic and modern colonial historic novel. A flotilla of birch-bark canoes was sent down from Oldtown and two or three old vessels which Lloyd's inspector would have

examined in a life preserver were patched up like gored horses at a bullfight to last long enough to receive their coup de grâce.

The most harrowing part was the case of the girls whose vacations expired and were forced to give way to their more fortunate sisters before the final and thrilling scenes. All were given a chance to do their turn in some capacity even at the useless sacrifice of film, and meanwhile the busy photographers wound off aquatic sports and beach revels, and even concocted a few impromptu comedy pieces. It was generally understood that all was for the benefit of the charity, and that no professionals were to be employed. But it was astonishing to Jim to find how his guests could act, also the local natives, boatmen, and fishermen when invited to perform.

"Say, Jim," said the director one day, for they had grown very chummy, "I've made some finds in this bunch of yours. That Jennie girl and her little runnin' mate Ettie, 'a' got all the makin's. Jennie's got the slow, easy, demure stuff and a wonderful screen face like's apt to happen when the features balance up and there's space to spare between the eyes. Ettie's got the pep and gets the temperamental stuff across."

"She's the big chief's daughter all right," said Jim. "You'd swear she had Indian blood in her."

In time the big piece was finished and with the new relays of guests others were made. No partiality was shown in the girls sent out from town, though naturally the director passed them through his tests for leading parts, and all the while everybody was having the most tremendous amount of fun. There was no more thought of protesting against such regulations as existed than there might be at Universal City itself. With over a hundred girls and sometimes more, this may sound surprising, but the secret lay in the fact that

all were not only intensely interested, but found in these exercises two of the most fundamental needs of the human soul—those of expression and appreciation.

Natures warped or shriveling or congealing behind the counters of stifling shops found here the opportunity of expansion, of coming into the bright light, not only of the sun, but of later publicity, which is to say a recognition of the individual as such—as a personality—not as a mere human machine to reel out yards of calico or dozens of shoe strings. They were known by names, not numbers. Such as had beauty found it an asset instead of a danger. Their food was plentiful and wholesome, no lack of ice cream, no lack of dancing, and the movies they saw were the results of their own efforts as tested out in a hastily erected projecting room; these to be greeted with astonishment or rapture or shrieks of laughter at some signal failure. Jim asked Pelton, the director, what he really thought. He screwed up his face. "Well, let's call it—educational," said he. "A piece like this is pretty sure of certain popularity, but there'll always be seating room where it's shown."

"Then you think it may pay expenses?"

Pelton's face had a peculiar expression. He started to speak, then checked himself.

"Sure thing," he answered. "And then some."

"Well," said Jim, "if you're right it will solve our problem here. The girls like to do it, and it keeps them interested and in order, and if there's any surplus it can go toward carrying on the idea on a bigger scale."

Pelton made no answer to this, but walked away with a peculiar smile on his face. Perhaps he was reflecting on the curious problem in metaphysics by which, when a man got very rich, everything seemed to acquire a Midas

touch, and perhaps he was thinking of something else.

CHAPTER VI.

All summer long, Margaret Dudley had been a great deal in Jim's thoughts. He had not written her about his efforts, partly because their slight acquaintance did not seem to warrant this, and partly because he desired first to score a success, about which he might manage to tell her in person. He had replaced the stolen car by its duplicate, and now when the last guest had departed and he had settled with Captain Fossett and arranged for the renewal of his lease for the following season, it occurred to Jim that it would be very pleasant to go back over the road, drop in casually at Miss Dudley's children's farm, describe his own institution, and show her that he was neither the selfish pleasure seeker, nor altogether the ridiculously easy mark which his previous adventure in doing good might appear to have indicated.

So he set off blithely with Terence and Ito, making an early start. A pleasant day's run brought him late in the afternoon past the abandoned farm where he had been so gloriously stripped of his goods and chattels. He had never made an effort to recover the car.

But the farm was no longer abandoned. The old house had been removed and a number of small attractive bungalows were springing up about a central edifice, apparently a sort of administration building with its amusement halls and classrooms. The grounds also were being cleared and trimmed, and the flanking pastures plowed and harrowed for a crop of winter wheat. Evidently Miss Dudley had carried out her plan of buying the property and enlarging her good work.

Jim held on his course to arrive presently at the John Phillips Memorial Home, which rather suggested a

brooder with the fluffy chicks swarming about it under the observation of white-clad "mothers."

Jim turned in, stopped in front of the house, and asked for Miss Dudley. There was an old-fashioned flower garden off one side, and a smiling young "mother" told him that he would find her there, so he leaped down and made his way thither.

Margaret, with the assistance of several of the children, was gathering flowers for the supper table. She looked up as he approached. It seemed to Jim that she was lovelier than ever, a little more plump perhaps, and her face had lost much of its tragic expression and was more serene. But her violet eyes fixed him with their same peculiar austerity, and her wide mouth drew itself in a straight line which, if not precisely severe, held a certain judicial expression which puzzled him a little. There was, in fact, almost an accusatory manner in her reception of him. Jim chuckled inwardly, taking it for granted that she supposed him to be still the self-indulgent amusement seeker. He rather gloated over her surprise when she should learn how he had spent his summer.

She gave him a firm little hand and he repressed a strong inclination to raise it to his lips. He could not have realized what a thrill of exaltation it was going to give him to see her again.

"I see that you carried out your plans about the old farm where I was despoiled," said he, after first greetings were exchanged.

"Yes, it's a good farm and has lain fallow for a number of years, and I have some hopes of getting my charity on a partially paying business. You see I am not a multimillionaire like yourself."

"Well," said Jim, "I guess if anybody can do it, you can. Benefactions in order to be thoroughly successful ought to be self-supporting to some extent.

But of course when it's a question of children or old people or the sick, it's rather a different matter."

"So that is why you chose working girls for your philanthropy?"

"Oh! So you've heard about it?" said Jim, a little crestfallen.

Miss Dudley's black eyebrows raised and she shot him a curious look. "Why, yes. I imagine about everybody in the country has heard about it. Haven't you seen to-day's paper?"

"No," Jim answered. "We made an early start and lunched on the side of the road."

Miss Dudley smiled. "Then I fancy you have quite a surprise ahead of you."

"Oh, the place has already been written up, a little," said Jim carelessly. "Reporters came down from time to time and looked us over, and I told them the object of my scheme, which was to give the girls some fun and, if we could make a decent picture or two, turn in the proceeds toward elaborating the establishment."

The violet eyes rested steadily on his. "Was that the extent of your intention?" she asked.

"Why, yes, of course. With our raw material we never really expected to do anything startling in the motion-picture line. But the place lent itself perfectly to early colonial and historical scenes, and I must say the girls played up astonishingly. We may have developed some really high ability for the screen."

A faint flicker of amusement passed over Miss Dudley's charming face. "Well, from the account in our Sunday newspaper, I should say that you had succeeded. In fact, I am inclined to think that you have builded better than you knew."

Jim was greatly elated at these words, despite their peculiar dryness of tone. Then, as she continued to regard him

with that intense examining scrutiny, he became a little uneasy.

"I hope they haven't given us a knock," said he.

"Knock is scarcely the word." She turned to a little girl. "Run up to the house, Clara, and ask Miss Minturn for to-day's paper."

"I thought we'd managed rather well," said Jim anxiously.

Miss Dudley's face turned very grave. "There is no criticism of the executive part of it," said she. "Quite the reverse, in fact."

"Then you don't mean to say that there has been an attack on the moral character of my plant?"

"No, neither of the plant nor of its guests or personnel."

"On me, then?" A swarthy flush came up under Jim's tan. "What are you driving at, anyhow, Miss Dudley? Do you mean to say that they have dared accuse me of mixing it up with the girls? Because if they have, it's a dirty slander and they'll pay for it if it costs me a cold million."

"Oh, nothing of the sort, Mr. Gladstone. As far as your social relations with your guests are concerned, there is not the slightest hint of anything unworthy. I am really terribly sorry for you. The account upset me a good deal because you had not impressed me at all as the sort of person which this malicious attack insinuates you to be."

"Good heavens! Miss Dudley," cried Jim, "don't keep me in suspense. Don't try to break it to me gently. I can't imagine what it's all about, but if it's anything scurrilous, then it's not true, that's all."

"Here comes the paper," said Miss Dudley, and she looked at him a little anxiously.

Jim grabbed the paper from the hands of the little girl and his horrified eyes fell upon a full page in color with reproductions of the scenes from several of the historic plays. A large por-

trait of Jennie Clark and Ettie Lawrence, with pictures of the colony, and one of himself in flannels talking to Director Pelton adorned it also. But these rotogravures made scarcely a dint on his retina, for his eyes were fastened on the leaders of the article.

"James Gladstone, oil millionaire, victimizes working girls."

"Clever trick to make them work for nothing as movie actresses."

"Miss Jennie Clark, star of Big Historic Production, draws only board and lodging for her services."

"Thought they were playing for fun, thus saving Gladstone payroll of one thousand dollars a day. No contracts signed, but Lawyer Ketcham says he can recover. Sentiment divided among fair guests of Piney Head, but Miss Jennie Clark claims that whatever the motive, her services are worth ten thousand dollars."

"Charitable ladies of Hub warmly defend Gladstone, and indignantly deny that millionaire had ulterior motive."

Jim let fall the hand holding the paper and stared at Miss Dudley with wild eyes.

"Good Lord!" he gasped. "Can you beat it?"

She gave him one earnest look, and then for the second time since their first meeting, a gale of laughter seized her, the second irrepressible and whole-hearted bit of mirth experienced by this lady since the death of her fiancé on the field of honor.

She laughed so hard that she was obliged to totter to a bench where she sank down and covered her face with her hands.

Jim did not resent her mirth. On the contrary, it warmed and comforted him, and was as balm of Gilead to his gaping wounds, crying to Heaven for justice. He knew, of course, that she would never have laughed like that if she had not been convinced that he was blameless.

Pulling himself together he scanned the infamous article. It was a magnificent advertisement for the historic play, but at that moment Jim did not feel that it paid to advertise. In fact, it gave him full credit for being a young man of keen intelligence and high executive ability. But painted him as a clever exploiter of such latent dramatic ability as might be found in any bright working girl who is a movie fan, which is to say, any bright working girl. Under pretext of their entertainment, their uplift, their moral and hygienic benefit, he had, according to insinuations which were just short of being legal charges, decoyed them to a hotel property which he had picked up at a bargain by trading on the impending ruin of a worthy seafaring man—who could have thought it of Captain Fossett!—and there at the emolument of roof and bed and board had worked them all summer in the production of a piece which might net him thousands.

The newspapers slipped from between Jim's nervous fingers, and he stared aghast at Margaret Dudley, who was beginning to get control of herself.

"Well, anyhow," said he, "the Boston ladies stood up for me."

Her laughter broke out afresh. "But don't you see, foolish, they had to."

"No, I don't see. They might have claimed that I bunkoed them, too."

"A woman, my dear Mr. Gladstone, especially a woman of strong mind and executive ability, cannot afford to admit that she has been bunkoed."

Jim chewed the cud of this idea in silence. "Well," said he desperately, "what do you think?"

She rose and offered him her hand, her face suddenly grave. Jim squeezed it rather hard and thought that he felt the faintest return pressure.

"I think that you are a dear. I think that you went about the whole business

with the honest endeavor of doing good."

"Well," said Jim slowly. "If you think that I don't care three whoops in—Hoboken what the rest of the world thinks."

CHAPTER VII.

Doctor Gladstone, this time, did not indulge in any Homeric laughter over the result of his son's sincere effort in doing good.

"It only goes to show, Jim," said he, "what a popular fallacy it is, that in order to benefit his fellow man, all that a philanthropic millionaire has to do is to open his purse. It is a pretty serious thing for a young man to be published broadcast in a leading newspaper as a trickster and exploiter of poor working girls. What are you going to do about it?"

"Just as I did before, dad. Take the loss and keep my mouth shut. If the picture amounts to anything, I shall deduct the expenses of making it and turn the profits over to the Red Cross. If they want to bring suit they can, but they've really got no claim. It never would have occurred to anybody, but some shyster lawyer who was a beau of Jennie's saw a chance to make a case of it and, backed up by a yellow journalist in a slack season, they managed to make quite a noise. My statement has been published in all the papers and people can take it or leave it."

"Then you're not going on with the Piney Head home?"

"No, sir. I shall turn my philanthropic efforts in another direction. Captain Fossett let me down, too, but I don't regret the good that I may have been able to do him. In fact, I don't regret any of it very much, since the most wonderful girl in the world believes in me."

"Too bad you can't combine forces with that wonderful girl, Jim."

"You've voiced a great truth, dad. But I'm afraid that such a woman loves but once."

Doctor Gladstone stroked his gray Vandyke. "She may love but once when that love runs its full course, my boy. But a healthy-minded, full-natured young woman does not sacrifice her life's happiness to a sentimental idea. Don't despair about her. Unless I'm much mistaken, you have already inspired in her the most promising interest which it is possible to rouse in the heart of a true woman. She feels responsible for you. She thinks that she started you on this career of doing good and she's going to watch your progress with a growing interest. You're not discouraged, are you?"

"About doing good? No, sir. I'm beginning to appreciate, though, that it takes some doing."

"Of course it does. So does everything that is worth while. But such disillusionments as yours are the reason why a great many rich people prefer to do their part through organized charities. The overhead is less even with a certain amount of expense in administrative quarters."

"I suppose so," said Jim, "but I'll have a few more tries before I quit, and then I shan't quit entirely."

"Any idea what you'll tackle next?"

"Not the least in the world, sir. I'm going to amble along on the same knightly quest. Having had no luck going north, I shall now sail south. Perhaps I may be able to improve the condition of a gang of West Indian pirates or Mexican bandits or I. W. W.'s or something. There's another comforting feature besides Margaret Dudley. I may have got badly singed, but I actually have done good to the people I started in to help."

Jim and Terence returned to Portland to get the forty-foot cruiser which Jim thought he might use during the

winter. Jim also desired to say a few things to Captain Fossett, and he left that shamefaced master mariner with sufficient food for reflection throughout the approaching winter. Then as it was still too early to start south, Jim and Terence made a flying tour through the Middle Western States, in which he learned a good deal about the social and economic conditions of all that part of the country, but aside from sundry acts of kindness which left as much bewilderment as blessings in his wake, he came upon no distinguished opportunity for doing good on a considerable scale. To tell the truth he didn't seek it out. He was still very sore over the results of his summer adventure, and though not precisely discouraged, yet in a sort of raw and tender state, and it had made him extremely wary of attack in benefactions of any magnitude.

He returned to spend Thanksgiving with his father. He sent several big crates of toys to the John Phillips Memorial Home, receiving a polite letter of acknowledgment from Margaret Dudley, which contained, however, no news or inquiries of a personal character. Had there been the slightest pretext for his doing so, Jim would have run up to see her; as he had nothing to report, he occupied himself in putting his boat *The Vagabondia* in commission for its southern cruise. He had retained the services of Ito, who had been serving Doctor Gladstone as butler, and procured another Japanese for his father. Then Jim, Terence, and Ito went aboard the stanch, comfortable craft on the second of December and laid their course southward.

It was cold cruising for the first two or three days, but after passing Absecom Inlet, they ran into sunny tempered weather, which daily improved. There seemed to be a large migration of small craft heading southward and probably an even greater flotilla of smaller craft going down through the

canals, for on entering the Sounds the waterways were fairly thronging with them.

"This will be the great North Atlantic Rum-Squadron, sor," said Terence. "'Tis a pilgrimage to the wet shrines of Cuba and the Bahamas. The boys can keep in sheltered waters to Key West, and from there even the eighteen-footers will take a chance on a stretch of open sea with lashin's of booze at the end of it."

"Some of them seemed to have managed to stock up for the voyage," Jim observed. "That bunch we were anchored among last night weren't singing 'How Dry I Am.'"

"No doubt 'tis the last of their stock," said Terence, "and like a caravan on the desert they are speeding up for the oasis before the liquid supply gives out." And he moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue. "No doubt we will be lookin' into Nassau, sor, and Havana?"

"Yes," said Jim good-naturedly, "if only to keep you from going on a still hunt and getting poisoned as you did in Portland. To tell the truth, I could do with a little drink myself. But we mustn't go and spoil it all."

Gliding on their way through the shoal-clear waters and soft-tempered airs, they came, one afternoon, to a long sea island with patches of cleared land and stately Southern pines with plummy tassels. Being in need of water and, seeing a landing ahead, they put over to it, deciding to fetch up there for the night. Others of the drifting population had acted apparently with the same idea, for there were two Northern boats already anchored there; a shabby forty-foot cabin launch which, though in need of paint and general repairs, appeared to have been a smart boat, and a speed launch of about the same size, which also presented a dilapidated appearance. The occupants of both appeared to be getting supper, as the still

fragrant air, with its piny odors, carried also the appetizing smells of coffee and bacon.

As Jim rounded up to anchor a little outside, he observed the name of the speed launch, a fifty-footer, and shoal of draft, "*Squirrel*—Portland, Maine."

"I don't seem to be allowed to forget about that place," said Jim.

He got in the dingy with Terence and went ashore to see what could be done about taking water and buying green vegetables. A path led up from the landing and, following this, they saw presently, through the pines, an old and stately plantation house, surrounded by a grove of magnificent live oaks, trees perhaps two hundred years old, of enormous girth and spread of limbs. But drawing nearer, it was apparent that the house, though occupied, was in a state of semiruin. The big columns of the porch were nude of paint and rotten at the foot, the portico sagged, the window shutters showed gaps, while the appearance of the roof, of uneven lines, made it doubtful that it was still water tight. In fact, the atmosphere of the whole premises was one of cruel poverty against a background of pride.

Nobody was in sight and, passing around to the rear, Jim saw an elderly man, evidently a gentleman, working in an unkempt garden. He looked up at Jim's approach and, as if rather glad of the interruption, dropped his hoe and mopped his brow with a large bandanna.

"Good afternoon, sir," said Jim. "Could you spare me a few buckets of water?"

"All you wish, sir. That is the one commodity with which we are still abundantly supplied. There is the well right yonder. Just help yourself, sir."

Terence went over to fill the buckets. Several trips were necessary, and Jim, observing that the old gentleman seemed inclined to conversation, re-

maintained to talk with him. He learned that he was a Major Shelby, and that his family had lived on the plantation for over a hundred and fifty years. There were two other big plantations on the island, people of the same stamp, who had lived in great magnificence before impoverished by the Civil War. At one time, the island had grown splendid crops of high-grade sea-island cotton.

"It is purely a question of capital, sir," said Major Shelby. "In these days of high rates of interest and quick returns we can find nobody who cares to put his money in such an investment. So we have been obliged to let our fields lie fallow and scratch for food, as I am doing at this moment. There does not seem to be any relief in sight, sir, but we are accustomed to adversity, and with a few sheep and hogs and garden truck we make the best of it."

The more Jim talked with the major, the more interested he became. The old gentleman, like all of his class, was a planter born and bred and he knew whereof he spoke. It seemed to Jim that here, at last, was presented a perfectly safe opportunity for doing good; and one from which he should not turn because of recent humiliating experiences. He had been stripped by thieves and vilified by a low-grade legal cunning, influencing the minds of a rather foolish and avaricious class—but here he would have to do with gentlemen of a stock the oldest and proudest which the country could claim.

Observing his interest and possibly suspecting he might be entertaining an angel, for Jim had every appearance of the rich Northern yachtsman, Major Shelby went more into detail. He invited Jim into the house and, in answer to his summons, a very old negro appeared from somewhere and actually produced two delicious juleps. Although sadly stripped of its more

precious treasures, Jim observed that there still remained some splendid pieces of furniture and old rugs and tapestries; these scarcely marketable because of their extreme decay. Then as they were talking, there came the sound of voices outside, and there entered two charming young girls, a middle-aged lady, as typical of her class as the old gentleman, and a young man of about Jim's own age. Major Shelby introduced them as his daughter, Mrs. Wade, his two granddaughters, Rose and Virginia, and his grandson, Shelby Wade. It appeared that they had just come in their sharpie from the mainland, where they had been for the mail and some few supplies. Jim found the girls charming, but the young man, who was tall and lean, with a clean-cut, aquiline face and very black hair, impressed Jim as playing the rôle of the motion-picture scion of an old Southern family. He had passed close to Jim's trim yacht, and it is to be feared that at that moment his heart was rife with envy and discontent.

Jim was invited to remain to supper, and accepted on condition that they lunch with him the following day. During the course of the simple but appetizing meal, he told them frankly a good deal about his own circumstances. He could not but notice the glow in Shelby Wade's dark eyes as he described his astonishing luck.

And then, his mind quite made up that here was to be found not only a singular opportunity for doing good, but also the meritorious endeavor to produce a valuable commodity, he offered point-blank to finance the reclamation of the whole island's cotton production.

"You see, major," said he, "I've got to do something with my surplus income, and I believe your proposition to be a very good one. If your neighbors wish to come into this thing we can draw up some sort of an agree-

ment which should be satisfactory to everybody and turn out profitably for us all."

It must have seemed to the poor old major as if a visitant from some other planet had been sent by Divine direction to the rescue of the community in its moment of greatest stress. There was, of course, difficulty to be overcome in the matter of labor, but this he was sure could be accomplished. Jim made it plain that he had no desire to interfere with the management of the project. He wished merely to finance it, and was willing to accept the loss in the event of its turning out unprofitably.

CHAPTER VIII.

The following days were busy ones. Jim met and talked with Major Shelby's neighbors, gentlemen of his own class and circumstance. He took a party of them across to the principal city of the region, where their company was duly incorporated, and a large deposit for immediate operations made in the local bank, and, satisfied that his scheme was fairly launched, Jim was about to continue his voyage South, planning to return three or four months later, when the peculiar mischievous devil which appeared to have been detailed to poison his attempts at doing good, took a hand in the game.

A number of boats of the Southern migration had passed, but the *Squirrel*, the forty-foot speed launch hailing from Portland, still frequented the vicinity, though she had changed her anchorage to a little bight about a mile farther down the shore where there was a small colony of negro fishermen. There were three men aboard her, and they were seldom in evidence; but passing two of them one day in the skiff, it had struck Jim that the face of one of them was familiar. He spoke to Terence about it.

"I've seen the felly, too, sor," said

Terence. "I have an idee he was one of the bunch of bums that suped in the making of the picture down there on Piney Head. They look to be a hard crowd, and no doubt will be runnin' back a load of rum on their return."

Then one day while walking on the shore with Virginia, the younger of the major's granddaughters, Jim saw the figures of two men about five hundred yards away come down from the pines and stand for a moment watching Virginia and himself. They got in a flat-bottomed skiff and rowed out to the *Squirrel*.

"I wonder why those men keep hanging around," Virginia asked.

"I don't know," Jim answered. "There seem to be a good many such floaters nowadays all over the country."

He had planned to leave the following day, and Virginia suggested after supper that they walk to the next plantation, about a mile and a half away, that Jim might say au revoir. A family of Conways had lived there for several generations. There were two daughters of about the age of Virginia, and a young man, the chum of Shelby Wade, who was the generally accepted suitor of Virginia's elder sister, Rose.

Jim agreed to this, and they set out in the late twilight. Mrs. Wade, who had made a correct estimate of Jim's character, offered no objection to his unchaperoned excursions, with Virginia. It would scarcely have been natural for her not to have cherished some hope that the two might become interested in each other, but such an idea had never entered Jim's head. For one thing Virginia's limited opportunities and lack of any worldly knowledge made her seem to him scarcely more than a child, although she had just turned twenty-one. But more than that he now acknowledged himself to be hopelessly in love with Margaret Dudley.

Virginia, for her part, if she had not actually fallen in love with Jim, would have needed but little encouragement to do so. She was really a very pretty girl, graceful, lissom, dark like her brother, with thick, fine-spun hair, and a softly modulated Southern voice.

They did not follow the road, scarcely more than a trail through the sandy fields, but took a little path which ran along the shore, and wound through piny groves and skirted little bays where springs bubbled out of the sand. These were dense in foliage of a semi-tropical sort, magnolia and rhododendrons, and water, and live oak, and big gum trees from the branches of which hung long festoons of Spanish moss, and higher up held great globes of mistletoe. The path would have been difficult to follow after dark, but a big yellow moon was just lifting itself above the treetops, growing brighter as it rose.

These sea islands are for some reason richer in everything than the mainland opposite. Perhaps because of their climate tempered by the proximity of the Gulf Stream, it would seem as though the land bordering the dominion of the sea gave of its best to the frontier. The soil is richer, possibly because of phosphates, the vegetation more luxuriant, the fauna more profuse, and the human habitation also appears productive of more vital types, more generous and brave. There is among islanders that sort of fearless independence to be found in mountaineers, perhaps because of close contact with the bigger elemental things not to be encountered in more populous communities.

But the glamour of the moonlight night, the pretty girl at his side, and the fact that he was a sort of protecting genie of the place was lost on Jim. He was thinking with profound satisfaction that all was now in order and that, barring some mishap impossible to

foresee, their effort for doing good should not prove a fiasco. Even while helping Virginia over the rail fence he was thinking to himself with what triumph he might announce his achievement to Margaret Dudley on his return North. Margaret had told him that in her opinion it was almost impossible to do much for able-bodied adults. Her motto in regard to charitable endeavor was "Hold fast to children."

Virginia poised herself on the top of the fence and Jim swung her easily down. The path dipped to the shore and they came out at the head of a little bight where it was necessary to trudge about fifty yards through the sand. Then on the edge of the bay where the path turned inland again, Virginia stopped.

"I've got some pebbles in my shoe," said she, and seated herself on a fallen log.

Jim dropped on one knee. "Let me," said he, and slipped the knot of the shoe string. They were in the shadow of a water oak, through the foliage of which the moonlight splashed to throw odd crescentic shadows on the white sand. Jim, bantering Virginia about wearing high-heeled shoes on such a promenade, was intent on securing the knot of the lacing when there came a rustle as of some prowling animal in the bushes behind him and with it a shriek from Virginia.

Jim swung about, but before he could rise, a heavy body landed on his shoulders and bore him down. Virginia shrieked again, her cry ending in a curious, muffled way. Then Jim found his arms wrenched back and his head and shoulders enveloped in something resembling a gunny sack, which smelled evilly of rancid oil. His wrists and ankles were bound quickly by two men, and something else was thrown over the sack and swathed so snugly about his face that he could scarcely breathe. He heard, indistinctly, low-voiced admoni-

tions passing between the assailants when he was picked up bodily by feet and shoulders and borne along, nearly smothered, to be lowered into a boat.

It was, of course, immediately evident to Jim that here was a perfectly good job of kidnaping, and something told him that the kidnapers were the rough trio off the speed launch, whom he and Virginia had seen watching them the evening before. He had evidently been recognized as the oil millionaire charged with duping the shopgirls, and the opportunity for seizing him and holding him for ransom in some lonely spot had been too easy to be missed.

Virginia's presence was a help rather than a hindrance to the kidnapers, who reasoned, no doubt, that while a high-spirited young fellow might prove stubborn about paying a ransom for himself, his chivalry would not permit his refusing it to liberate a young girl under his protection. And Jim admitted to himself that in this opinion they were entirely correct.

His rage at what had happened was secondary to his solicitude for Virginia, and the necessity of obtaining her immediate release no matter at what cost. This accomplished he could turn his whole energy to the capture of the bandits. Jim tried to speak, but the effort brought only a tightening of the greasy swathings around his head and face, so that he could scarcely breathe, much less articulate.

The skiff in which the two captives had been placed was rowed rapidly out from the shore, and a few minutes later they were lifted aboard a larger vessel, no doubt the speed launch, and carried down into the cabin. Presently the motor began to turn over. Then somebody removed the wrappings, pulled the sack off his head and went out into the cockpit. Jim blinked about, and in the glimmer of a standing light, set in gimbals on the forward bulkhead, saw Virginia crouched on the edge of a bunk.

"Oh, Jim," she murmured, "we've been kidnaped."

"So it appears," Jim answered. "I hope you are not hurt, Virginia."

"No, but I was nearly smothered. They put a nasty rag around my mouth and it tastes of oil."

Jim turned to the companionway. "Hello, there!" he called. "Can't you give the lady a glass of water and let her rinse her mouth?"

"Sure," answered a rough voice. There was the gurgle of a jug and a big, rawboned man, the one whom Jim and Terence had recogized, lowered himself into the cabin with a tin pint cup of water which he handed to Virginia.

"We didn't aim to be rough," said he, "but we couldn't take no chances."

"Quite so," said Jim. "It's about a twenty-year job if you slip up on it. Are you running the show?"

"Well, yes, I reckon I am. You may not know it, but there's an account between us ain't been settled yet."

"That's the first I've heard of it," said Jim. "When was the bill presented?"

"Wal, you see it's like this, Mr. Gladstone. I was one of the pirates in that there movie show you rigged last summer at Piney Head. I went down on that hulk they blew up and like ter drowned, not bein' much of a swimmer, and all I got out of it was my five a day. Now these hyer other stars are puttin' in their claims through Lawyer Ketcham, so I don't see no reason why I shouldn't collect, too."

"I see," said Jim, "and not having much faith in Lawyer Ketcham, you're going about it in your own way."

"Wal, that's about the size of it."

"What's your price?" asked Jim.

"Fifty thousand."

"Charlie Chaplin you rate yourself with?"

"No, sir, it's more a question of damages. Injury to my health like. I ain't

felt right since I got that duckin'. That's the reason I'm goin' South."

Jim reflected for a moment. If he had been alone he would have laughed at the claim and told them to carry on. But it was imperative that Virginia be released immediately, not only for her own sake, but to save her family the anxiety caused by her disappearance. He was responsible for her safety and well-being, the more so as her abduction was to some extent the result of his own ridiculous adventure in doing good.

"Very well," said Jim shortly. "Of course this act of yours is a criminal one and your claim absurd; and if it wasn't for Miss Wade I'd see you somewhere before I'd pay a cent. I don't happen to have fifty thousand dollars in loose change, but if you'll turn your boat around and set us on the landing I'll give you my word to hand it to you to-morrow and let you beat it."

As he was talking, two heads had been thrust over the rim of the hatch, like the heads of turtles, and at Jim's words one of them began to wag.

"That don't go, Cy," said a husky voice. "We gotta hold 'em till we get the money."

"Cy's" down-East caution appeared to agree with this decision.

"I guess that's right, Mr. Gladstone," said he. "If this hyer was a reg'lar business deal, your word would be all right, but as the case stands we can't afford to take no chances."

"Look here, Cy," said Jim. "You stand a lot better show of getting away with the job if you do as I say. My word's always been a good bet, so far. I'm not worrying about our safety. You men are not Mexican bandits, but just ordinary everyday American holdups that see a chance for some easy money. The important thing is Miss Wade's immediate return. If she doesn't get home to-night it's not going to matter much just when she does get home,

and meantime this neighborhood will be getting pretty well combed out."

But Cy and his mates could not see it this way. Their plans had been carefully laid. Jim and Virginia were to be landed at a desolate spot and kept there under guard until the money should be paid. Jim was to write his check for fifty thousand dollars with a note to Major Shelby requesting him to see that the check was honored immediately and urging that no attempt be made to detain the bearer, who would then return and take them to a place whence they could make their way home. To all of this Jim listened with a contemptuous smile.

"You fellows must have a lot of faith in each other," said he dryly.

"Meaning——" asked Cy.

"Well, what's to prevent the bird that gets the cash putting one over on the others. You'd do a lot better to take my word. But that's a question of who you think you can trust."

The effect of this speech was immediately apparent. The kidnappers were infused with sudden mutual distrust. They withdrew to the cockpit where a hoarse, low-voiced discussion ensued. Meanwhile the launch was rushing swiftly through the still water and rapidly widening the distance from home. Then apparently a decision was arrived at, for Cy's square bulk lowered itself again into the cabin.

"Lissen here, Mr. Gladstone," said he. "There's only one way to fix this business if you're in a hurry to get the young lady back to her folks. You write that check and a note to the major telling him to see the money's paid and we're not to be interfered with. Then I'll set you and Miss Wade ashore in a nice spot we've located up one of these hyer creeks and leave you there alone with water and grub a-plenty. As soon as we get the money we'll beat it out and I'll send the major word where to find you."

This plan was anything but to Jim's taste. But as he looked at Virginia's pale, frightened face he decided that he was in no position to argue over terms. The main thing was to get her out of the difficulty as soon as possible, and he reasoned that it would be better that she be left alone with him than held indefinitely by the kidnapers. So, finding Cy obdurate, he was forced to accede. He wrote the check and then a note which read as follows:

DEAR MAJOR SHELBY: I have been fool enough to get kidnaped by some men who know me to be a millionaire and have grabbed Virginia and me and are holding us for fifty thousand dollars ransom. Of course, it is of the utmost importance that your granddaughter be set at liberty at once. Please therefore see that the check is honored and the money paid in cash. Do not make any effort to arrest or follow the bearer or bearers. They are desperate men and it would be dangerous to Virginia's safety to take any action until after her release. I am responsible for what has occurred and my only desire is the immediate return of your granddaughter. Faithfully yours,

JAMES GLADSTONE.

Cy and his mates examined the note, then Cy put it into his pocket with the check.

"That reads all right," said Cy. "You see we're *all* a-goin' to get that money."

"And how about us?" Jim asked.

"Well, we'll set you and the lady down on a nice safe spot over in the marsh with grub and blankets and a tarpaulin to rig a shelter in case it showers. They might be a couple of days in getting to you, but the weather's mild and fixed, and I'll leave you stores a-plenty."

The swift launch continued to rush along at close to a maximum of speed, twenty knots perhaps. Apparently with their present daring project in view, Cy had familiarized himself with the locality, and had ferreted out a proper spot in which to hold a prisoner. It was a little past midnight when the motor slowed and, glancing through a

porthole on either side, Jim saw that they were making their way cautiously up a winding creek, whether in the labyrinthian marshes of the mainland or of some other sea island he had not the least idea. Then the motor stopped and Cy's voice invited them to come out.

"Here we be," said he, "and a long ways from home. Now we'll just set you ashore and be startin' back."

The full moon was in its zenith, and by its brilliant glare Jim examined the desolate aspect of the place with misgiving. It appeared to be a low island in a sea of marsh. The ground was apparently firm as it supported some great Southern pines, with long waving plumes and under them a growth of scrub oak, and flanking it in the vague distance he could see a dark rampart of what looked like solid forest; but he doubted that this could be reached save by a boat, as the marsh lay all about. Cy and another man picked up the flat-bottomed skiff which had been hauled across the stern.

"Suppose they can't find this place?" Jim asked.

"Oh, they'll find you, all right," said Cy. "I'll cut off a section of the chart and mail it to the major from down below. You've come across like a gentleman, and I don't intend you shall suffer none. There's a full campin' outfit in the skiff—five pounds of biscuits and a ham and five pounds of pork and a bag of cornmeal and a dozen cans of beans and tomatoes and things, and plenty a coffee and sugar and matches, and a lantern and an ax and cookin' gear. I'm givin' you the tent off'n the cockpit and a two-gallon jug of water, though you won't need it, as there's a spring on this little island, and say, Mr. Gladstone," he thrust his head toward Jim's ear, "there's a quart of old peach brandy in the bag with the fish lines. I know it's good because I made it myself."

"Well, I must say," said Jim, "you seem to be doing this kidnaping job all shipshape and proper. But don't forget about that letter. Look here, if we get out of this without any hardship, I'll let you off and take the loss. But mind you, if there's any hitch, I'll get you sooner or later if it costs a million dollars."

Cy turned this proposition in his mind. "Say, Mr. Gladstone," said he, "you're a good sport. That's a bargain. You can keep the skiff. Then if there should be any hitch which I don't count on, all you gotta do is to paddle down the creek to sea water and you can signal some boat going past. Only if I was you I'd stay just where you be, as it's marsh all about and it would be a long pull before you got to solid ground. Wal, I guess you might as well be goin' overside."

Jim and Virginia got into the skiff, which was not the only small boat, as the launch carried also a yacht's dinghy on the cabin house. Cy in another access of generosity handed Jim several packages of cigarettes.

"I can't think o' nuthin' more you're apt to need," said the cheerful pirate. "Good luck, folks," and he thrust the skiff clear of the launch's side.

Jim picked up an oar and started to paddle to the solid ground. The launch backed and turned, the water churned up under its stern, and a few moments later it had glided around a bend of the creek and disappeared, leaving a swirl of foam and eddies glistening in the brilliant moonlight.

CHAPTER IX.

Terence O'Toole was tidying up the *Vagabondia* in the rosy dawn when he saw a skiff put off from the landing and a few moments later Shelby Wade came alongside and looked up at Terence with a scowl on his dark, handsome face.

"Where's Mr. Gladstone?" he demanded.

"Sure I thought he was stopping the night at the house, sor."

"Well, he's not!" snapped Shelby. "He's disappeared, and so has my sister, Miss Virginia. Do you know anything about it?"

"I do not, sor," Terence answered, much disturbed. "More than that I do not see how they could go from here without a boat, nor havin' this one, why Mr. James should take another. And when did you see them last?"

"They left last night after supper," said Shelby, "to walk over and make a call at the Conways. None of us sat up for my sister, and we discovered only half an hour ago that she was not in the house."

"Then they must have stopped the night there at the Conways, sor," said Terence.

"No," said Shelby, "I telegraphed over and they're not there. They haven't been there at all."

"Telegraphed, sor," said Terence, wrinkling his brows.

"Yes. Mr. Ravenel Conway and I were in the army signal corps and we've run a wire between the two houses. Now what the deuce has happened to them?"

If Shelby had felt any suspicion of Terence knowing anything of the affair, it vanished at the Irishman's expression. His gray, bushy eyebrows lowered while his face showed the alarm produced by this news. As if seeking some solution to the mystery he stared across the flat face of the water, and in doing so discovered in the distance a rapidly moving object which was followed by a considerable disturbance. Stepping to the companionway he took the binoculars from the rack and focused them.

"Here comes perhaps the answer to that riddle, sor," said he, and his scared

face hardened. "Yonder is that speed launch which has been hangin' about the premises since we came ourselves, and she is headin' in full bore."

"What has that speed launch and her three loafers got to do with it?" Shelby demanded.

"I cannot say, sor, but I misdoubt there is some devilment afoot."

The *Squirrel* came foaming in, passed them at full speed about a quarter of a mile away, then slowed for the landing, and the tide being high, ran up alongside, reversed and stopped. A man leaped off on to the jetty and strode off in the direction of the big house.

Terence lowered himself into Shelby's skiff. "Lave us hurry over," said he. "I do not like the look of this. I have a hunch that these devils have much to do with the disappearance of Mr. Jim and your sister, sor."

The launch had put off from the landing and had come to a stop in the deep water. Shelby and Terence pulled straight in, disembarking on the beach. They hurried to the house, and on coming in sight of the porch saw the major, gesticulating violently as he harangued Cy. Shelby in turn ran up the steps.

"Grandson," cried the old gentleman in the shrill, querulous voice of age and emotion, "this bandit has kidnaped your sister and Mr. Gladstone."

Shelby was about to make a rush at Cy, but Terence dropped a powerful hand on his shoulder.

"Steady, sor," said he. "Let us first see what it's all about."

The major thrust Jim's letter into his grandson's hand. "Read that," said he. Shelby glanced through the letter with lurid eyes and seemed again about to spring on Cy, who was watching him guardedly.

"Wait, sor!" Terence repeated, and, taking the letter, scanned it through, then looked at the major and shook his head.

"Major," said he, "if 'twas Mr. Jim alone they had grabbed I would advise destroyin' these dirty scuts at wance. But since 'tis a question of the young lady and these bein' his orders there is nothing for it but to carry them out and git the devils later."

"See here," said Cy, "I'm just collectin' my little bill."

"A bill is it?" growled Terence.

"Sure. I acted all summer for Mr. Gladstone and all I drew down was five dollars per. That pays all right for a brush cutter, but I reckon I owe it to my art to collect in full. I played a leadin' rôle as pirate, and I was blowed up on that old hulk and had to swim ashore."

Major Shelby and Wade stared at him in astonishment, then looked at Terence, who began to laugh. He checked himself, then turned to the major.

"Lave us go to town and pay him the money, sor," said he. "It is the wish of Misther Jim."

Jim and Virginia had passed two not entirely unpleasant days camping under the pines. The shadows were lengthening at the close of their second day, when there seemed to come a thrumming vibration through the stillness, and, a moment later, the *Vagabondia* appeared, moving slowly around the bend of the creek. They got into the skiff and paddled out to meet her. There was quite a party aboard; the major, Mrs. Wade, Shelby, Virginia's sister, Rose, and Ravenel Conway, Wade's chum. They welcomed Jim and Virginia in rather silent relief, but the major's stern old face was a little grim while that of Shelby was dark with some suppressed emotion.

Terence had already explained the pretext taken advantage of by Cy for collecting the "salary" at which he valued his services. Jim had not much to say about this, stating merely that since Virginia was under his care he had

not felt justified in refusing any terms which might lead to her immediate release.

There was an atmosphere of constraint aboard during the return trip. All but Shelby Wade and his friend Conway went immediately to the house on landing, when Jim, scenting trouble, looked inquiringly at Shelby.

"You act as if you thought I were in some way to blame for this," said he.

"I do, sir, most emphatically," said the young Southerner, "but before discussing the matter further, I have the honor to demand the character of your intentions toward my sister?"

Jim stared at him in astonishment. Then realizing suddenly the trend of this demand, the blood rose to his head.

"There can be no question of intentions," said he. "I did everything in my power to insure her safety and immediate release."

"That is not enough, sir," said Shelby. "Through having left certain obligations unfulfilled, you have exposed her to rough treatment and endangered her reputation by compelling her to spend two days and nights alone with you on an island in a swamp. Her fair name is exposed to slander and, as her brother, I have the honor to insist that you make all due reparation which a gentleman may do."

"What?" asked Jim, his anger rising.

"It should be evident, sir, that an immediate marriage is the only solution."

Jim scarcely knew whether to laugh or swear. It was plain enough to him that Shelby with his distorted, or rather exaggerated, traditions of Southern chivalry felt himself to be acting entirely within his right, while a tremendous admiration and approval sat upon the features of his young friend Conway. In fact, even Terence appeared impressed, such procedure falling entirely within the code of his own inherited

hot-blooded Irish ethics. He looked at Jim anxiously.

But Jim himself was seized with a sudden, violent exasperation. So here again he had with all knightly and generous purpose of doing good, taken a cropper into the worst pitfall which had as yet entrapped him. Already sore enough at this far-reaching result of his Piney Head fiasco, and compelled to pay fifty thousand dollars tribute to a clever scalawag, he was now required by this hot-headed young fool to marry a girl who, while charming enough, he did not love in any sense.

He attempted to explain his position, but Shelby would not listen. The boy was convinced that the honor of his house was at stake.

"Well, then," said Jim, now thoroughly at the end of his patience, "I flatly refuse to meet your demand. What's the answer?"

"This, sir," said Shelby, and before Jim could raise a hand to prevent, he stepped forward and struck him a ringing slap across the face.

To Jim's everlasting credit, he took the blow with no effort to return it. Terence, watching him, shook his head. Jim moistened his lips. "I suppose that means a duel," said he.

"It does, sir," said Shelby, "unless you are afraid to fight."

"No," said Jim disgustedly, "I've never been afraid to fight. When do you want it?"

Shelby glanced at the sun, which was not yet below the pine tops. "The sooner the better," said he, "and before you can rouse the sympathy of my family. There is still light enough, and I see that you have some thirty caliber Colts in the rack in your cabin. If you are gentleman enough to give me satisfaction, we will go ashore immediately and settle this affair. Mr. Conway may act as my second, and there is no objection to your man, O'Toole, who appears to understand the obliga-

tions of gentlefolk, serving in the same capacity for you."

Jim looked at Terence with an expression of disgusted inquiry. The Irishman shook his head.

"'Tis a fool business, sor," said he, "but belike 'tis the custom of the country. I do not see how you can well refuse with honor what the young gentleman is askin' of you."

"Nor I," said Jim. "All right. Go get the guns and let's have it over with." He raised his hand to his cheek. "I can't take that sort of stuff from anybody."

What immediately followed made not the slightest impression on Jim's mind. He was thinking with profound discouragement, not of the chances of his being killed, but on the utter futility of his sincere and strenuous efforts at doing good. He lighted a cigarette and stood by the rail reflecting on his failures, while Conway and Terence went into the cabin and took from the case the two thirty-caliber police revolvers which Jim had purchased as a part of his boat's equipment.

The image of Margaret Dudley floated before Jim's eyes, and he wondered if she would laugh when she heard the result of this last supreme fiasco. He had not the slightest intention of harming Shelby Wade while still appreciating the fact that Shelby might easily bring his own philanthropic career to an abrupt and ridiculous termination.

In the same abstract state of soul, Jim got into the dinghy with the others. Terence took the oars and pulled them down the beach a little way, landing oddly enough at the identical cove where Jim and Virginia had been seized. The evening was absolutely still, the air sweet with the fragrance of pines, and overhead the big buzzards, as if scenting bloodshed, were circling not far above the treetops in great sweeping spirals.

But Jim was unconscious of any beauty in the immediate surroundings. A mantle of gloom had fallen upon him, not of fear at what might immediately follow, but a profound melancholy, edged with deep disgust at the failure of every conscientious effort on his part to dispense the great fortune of which, from the first, he had felt himself to be a sort of trustee.

They got out of the boat, which Terence made fast, and, he and Conway carrying the pistols, walked up the flat beach to the edge of the woods. Here young Conway, after a few muttered words with Shelby, turned to Terence.

"We'll call it twenty paces, if that's agreeable to you, Mr. O'Toole," said he.

"Twenty paces let it be, sor," Terence answered sepulchraly.

"They may stand back to back," said Conway, "and at the given word both are to take ten paces, turn and fire one shot."

To this Terence made objection. "And what if one were to walk faster than the other, sor? In that case he might be shootin' his opponent in the back and him still goin'."

"Very good, then," Conway agreed. "If you prefer the French procedure we can station them at twenty paces and let them fire at the word."

"It strikes me that would be better, sor," said Terence, who had noted Jim's apathy and distrusted Shelby's hot impatience.

It was accordingly thus arranged. The distance was paced off by the two seconds, when Jim and Shelby were placed on their positions. Though the weapons were self-cockers, the hammers were set by the seconds and the revolvers handed to the principals. Shelby's face was a little pale, though his dark eyes were burning and eager; but Jim was to all appearances as indifferent as though engaging in practice with Terence from the stern of the *Vaga-*

bondia with an empty pickle bottle for target.

Of the four, Terence alone was cold with apprehension. He had hoped to the last that there might be a good deal of bluff about the Southern boy's insistence, and he now began to wonder if his duty to Doctor Gladstone did not require of him a prevention of the silly duel. But there was much that was old-school about Terence, and he did not see how he could now in honor to his master withdraw him from the affair. Jim had taken a blow in the face, and Terence knew that Shelby was not of the breed to apologize.

Young Conway, in the traditions of whose family were numerous duels, showed neither nervousness nor hesitation.

"I shall count three, gentlemen," he said. "At the word *three* you will raise your pistols and fire instantly. Are you ready?"

"Ready," came in one voice from the two young men.

"One—two—*three*."

The two weapons rose simultaneously. Shelby fired and Jim swung half round in his tracks. He recovered himself and looked up. A buzzard soared low over his head.

"I always have hated those rotten birds," said Jim slowly, then sighted at the encircling fowl. There was a sharp report and a crumpled mass of feathers came flopping down and struck the water with a splash. Jim tottered back two steps and leaned against a trunk of a pine. Terence rushed to his side, Conway following him. Shelby Wade stood for a moment upright, then walked forward slowly, his face deathly white.

"My God!" cried Terence in consternation. "He has it clean through the chest."

It was true. The thirty-caliber steel-jacketed bullet had perforated the right side of Jim's chest about three inches

under the clavicle, coming out through the shoulder blade. Still leaning against the tree, he gave a slight cough, spat out a little blood, then looked at Shelby with a smile.

"Well, Mr. Wade," said he, "are you satisfied?"

Shelby's nerve seemed on the point of deserting him. Conway spoke in his place. "I think I can answer for my principal that the affair need go no further," said he.

"Very well," said Jim. "Then I have the honor to wish you good day. Come, Terence, let's get out aboard."

Terence passed his arm under his shoulders, but Shelby spoke up. "You must bring him to the house," said he.

"Thank you kindly, sor," said Terence dryly, "but I do be thinkin' Mr. Gladstone has had enough of Southern hospitality for the time bein'. I will be takin' him to a doctor, and losin' no time about it, sor."

And, picking Jim up in his strong arms, he bore him down across the beach to the dinghy, laid him in the stern and, stepping in after him, shoved vigorously off.

CHAPTER X.

Jim rested luxuriously against the pillow of his wheeled chair and watched the brightly colored throng of America's gayest winter resort. It was full season at Palm Beach, and the costly display would have made Monte Carlo look drab and bought a daily food ration for about all of starving Armenia.

As sometimes happens in perforating gunshot wounds of the thorax, where the projectile is steel-jacketed, of small caliber and high velocity, Shelby's bullet had pierced his upper chest without injury to any nerve or blood vessel of size. And, thanks to healthy tissues and cleanliness, no infection had followed. The lung had been deflated temporarily from piercing of the pleural sack, and to get the bellows back in working order

Jim took exercise with "the blow bottles." The surgeon had merely recommended these and rest. As the small darky propelled his chair slowly under the high shade of the palms, Jim looked with mild interest at the passing faces. And then suddenly he sat up with a gasp which sent through him a twinge of pain.

For slowly approaching him, propelled by a white-clad nurse, was such a chair as his own; and in it the materialized object of many long and wistful daydreams. Although the charming face lacked the rich coloring which he remembered, there was no mistaking the vivid, violet eyes with their black-fringed lambrequins, and the wide, sweet mouth set a little aslant. It was Margaret Dudley, evidently convalescent from some illness.

She recognized Jim at the same moment, and both pronounced simultaneously the word "Stop" as the chairs came abreast.

"Miss Dudley!" murmured Jim. "What's happened you?"

"Jim Gladstone! What's happened you?"

"A little setback in my headlong rush of high endeavor. Have you been ill?"

"Yes. 'Flu' and a touch of pneumonia. And you?"

"A bullet through the breather. I fought a duel—or at least I was fought a duel against. My own victim was a buzzard."

"Have you lost your mind, too?"

"No, only fifty thousand dollars and a little more self-assurance. Stripped again by the Philistines. A sort of back-fire of the Piney Head fiasco. All it lacked was that they forgot to fine me twenty-five dollars for shooting a scavenging fowl."

"Please stop talking in cryptograms and tell me what happened."

They caused their chairs to be drawn out of the channel. Margaret's nurse seated herself on a bench at a little dis-

tance with a book, while Jim's small darky composed himself for a nap.

Talking slowly and in a low voice, Jim described his misadventure and, having ascertained that he was entirely out of danger, Margaret tilted back her head and indulged in the third irrepressible laugh of their acquaintanceship.

"At any rate," said Jim, "each time we meet I am able to furnish you with the makings of a good laugh. And that is what you need. You were made to laugh rather than to mourn."

"I've stopped mourning, Jim."

He thrilled under this first sound of his Christian name on her lips.

"That's good news." He looked at her inquiringly. A tinge of color spread over her skin, diaphanous from illness.

"You see, Jim. You're not the only one to get into awkward situations and be made ridiculous by a too-impulsive method of doing good."

"What?" cried Jim, raising himself erect in his chair. "Has anybody had the nerve to knock you?"

Margaret gave her twisted smile and a little gleam showed from her violet eyes. "Not long ago," said she, "just before I was taken ill, I received a letter from a Canadian girl, a Red Cross nurse. She asked me rather impertinently if the John Phillips Memorial Home for Children could by any chance have been given its name in memoriam of Captain John Phillips, A. E. F., late of Boston; and, if so, through what motive. She went on to explain that she had become engaged to Captain Phillips less than a week before he was killed in action, and for this reason she did not quite understand why a young, unmarried Boston lady, who was no relation, should found that particular sort of charity for this especial hero. Now you had better laugh a little yourself."

Jim did not laugh. He felt rather like singing a Jubilate. His eyes may have told how this news affected him,

for a deeper wave of color swept over Margaret's face.

"I never felt such a fool in my life," said she. "Of course this news is not going to affect my carrying on the work, though it shall be under another name. But as you may easily imagine it has effectually dried my tears."

Jim, with a pulse which a fortnight earlier might have proved dangerous to his lacerated alveoli, laid his hand upon the back of hers.

"I'll tell you what it is, Margaret," said he. "Any rich person can spend money on himself with perfect safety, but you've got to mind your step when you start in to dispense it for doing good."

CHAPTER XI.

Doctor Gladstone, who had run down to Palm Beach to see how his son was getting on, found Jim in so buoyant a state of heart that he permitted himself another good laugh over the most recent discomfiture.

"At any rate, dad," said Jim, "I got some real action this time. Major Shelby writes me that everything is going strong, and with less difficulty and expense than he had counted on. Young Wade is making amends for his damn foolishness by working day and night, and taking it full and by, it looks as if I might put this thing across and produce a lot of cotton and drag a community of our best old Southern families out of the slough of poverty and despond, to say nothing of adding importantly to one of the country's most necessary products."

"That's fine, Jim. How about brother Cy and the other kidnapers?"

"Oh, I let them slide, just like Mr. and Mrs. King. You see, if it hadn't been for them, I'd never have seen Margaret again, and if it hadn't been for Cy I shouldn't have found her here."

"And how about Margaret?"

"Well, I'm not rushing things, dad.

That appears to have been the principal fault in my method. One of these days that sweet and tender lady is going to have a sure enough opportunity for doing good. She's still terribly sore about the late Captain John Phillips. I know the feeling a little, but just imagine what it must be to a sensitive girl to get a memorial home going full blast and then find that its object and tutelary deity had turned her down cold and got engaged to another girl a week before his martyr's crown. Must put her rather off men altogether."

"Off that one at least," Doctor Gladstone admitted. "But aside from all personal feeling, since you are both working for the same lofty purpose, it seems to me that you might pool your efforts a little."

"Well, you see there's one point on which we can't agree. She claims that aside from relieving immediate distress it's hardly worth while trying to help people who are quite capable of helping themselves if they want to bad enough. Her specialty is giving the kids a start."

"I think she's right."

"So do I, up to a certain point. At the same time, I maintain that one can do a lot for able-bodied adults that are bogged down or on the wrong track, or have lost their courage or faith or pep or whatever it is that enables people to get on. I'm going to give it another try, and then if I run into a deadfall again, I'll admit that all men are ingrates."

The devoted Doctor Gladstone returned North to continue his warfare in suburban trenches of snowy filth against the microbic hosts of "flu" and pneumonia. Jim's condition rapidly improved, and in a few days he was able to walk about and practice filling the deflated lung to normal dimensions by deep breaths of the resinous and briny air. He spent long hours with Mar-

garet Dudley, whose robust physique was rapidly throwing off the ill effects of mental disturbance and its ensuing illness. Doctor Gladstone had told her of Jim's immediate resolution on finding himself suddenly very rich. And how he had been already on his quest of doing good at their first meeting when Margaret had so severely rated him for being, as she had wrongly supposed, an idle pleasure seeker.

"I did you a very great injustice, Jim," said she, "and I'm awfully sorry, while at the same time I am relieved to know that I'm not entirely responsible for all the trouble you've had."

"The trouble hasn't done me any harm," said Jim, "and it has taught me a lot. I'm beginning to understand rich people better. Every poor person with any spark of generosity thinks that if only he were rich he'd do such a lot for everybody, and he can't understand why rich people don't do it. It's impossible for him to realize that it is about as hard to spend money usefully as it is to make it."

"Hold fast to children," said Margaret. "You can't go wrong with them."

"But it relieves the parents of their obligations," Jim objected.

"Perhaps—but I don't care if it does. The children get the benefit."

"Well," said Jim, "there doesn't seem to be much chance of missionary work in this pleasure city. It's a sort of exposition of unearned increment. I thought of cruising round the Bahamas, but a man I talked to last night, who'd just come from Nassau, tells me these caymen and cinch blowers are beginning to roll in fat surfeit, thanks to American prohibition. Their only worry is lest the eighteenth amendment be repealed with the next administration. It's brought a swarm of spenders who save up in the United States and pour millions into the West Indies."

But the following day Jim had reason to reconsider his statement that no financial support was required by the gay and glittering frequenters of Palm Beach. During his sojourn there, he had noticed several times a family of New Yorkers who bore an aristocratic name and who appeared to be much in evidence and in demand because of their attractive personalities, clothes, jewels, and participation in the different gay events. The mother was something of a grande dame, beautiful, with snowy hair, and that cachet of elegance which takes several generations for the making. The daughters, three in number, were uncommonly pretty and of well-bred demeanor; and a son, about twenty-five, was the type of young New Yorker which theater and movies find it so difficult to depict, handsome, polished, easy of manner, with a certain keen shrewdness in his face which differentiates the young American of fortune and position from Englishmen of the same class. Jim, watching them with interest, at several times thought to himself that here was a representative family of America's upper class, who so far as liberty and the pursuit of happiness were concerned extracted full measure from what life had to offer with elegance and dignity, and who must be about as far removed from carking care as it is possible to imagine.

He discovered his mistake by what he thought to be a humiliating accident. Finding, while on a stroll, a sunny and secluded spot on the edge of a little bay he stretched himself out on the warm sand to rest, and presently dropped off to sleep. The murmur of voices partially roused him, but it was not until a rather startling statement had been absorbed by his drowsing consciousness that he fully awoke to the fact of his position. He had unwittingly overheard something which he knew the speakers would be dismayed to have let go beyond themselves, and

Jim had no idea of how long they had been talking or what other personal family secrets had been divulged. These speakers were the young man of the family, to which Jim had ascribed such singular blessings, and the eldest daughter. They were apparently sitting on the other side of the cluster of scrub palmetto behind which Jim had stretched out, and as they were on the edge of the path, Jim hoped that they might finish their consultation and go their way without discovering him. He had already heard enough to make it extremely awkward for him to reveal his presence, and the chances were that they would receive his assurance of unwilling eavesdropper who had just awakened with disbelief.

Wherefore Jim decided to lie motionless and spare the contretemps.

"I tell you, Evelyn," said the man's voice, "there's no other way out. You've got to marry this old rounder and make him come across. We're in the last trench. Father writes that the least uncertainty about his credit at this moment would blow him higher than a kite. He's carrying this great load of stuff on a shoe string, and his loans would be called and he'd be bankrupt and buried in debt as deep as that dry hole I've sunk all I could beg and borrow in."

This last expression struck on sympathetic ears. Jim had seen unfortunates who had sunk their fortunes and those of friends in dry borings, and not far from the gusher which had so richly returned his own gamble.

"But I just can't do it, Jim," murmured the girl, a sob in her voice.

"Well, then this family goes glimmering, that's all! Mother's jewels are all in soak, and I'm picked clean and owe a thousand gambling debts, and the hotel people are just about ready to grab our trunks and wish us bon jour. Announcement of your engagement with Hartwell would be good for an indefi-

nite standoff. They'll keep their mouths shut, but they want their money, and you can't blame them."

"Oh, dear!" groaned the girl. "If I make the play, I'll go through with it. But you know what a horror he is."

"I know. It's awful. But it's the last chance. I don't care about myself, but there's mother and the girls, and dad's getting on, and I doubt he'd stand the gaff. He'd walk into his den and there'd be a muffled report and ruin. He says that he can weather it if he can keep up the bluff another thirty days. But you know what these society reporters are. 'Vandergoote Family Sojourn at Palm Beach Brought to Abrupt End. Luggage Seized by Hotel Management,' and all that sort of stuff. It's up to you, sis. You're the one white hope. You and only you can save the family from ruin and disgrace, and I've got a sneaking notion that old Hartwell suspects something. He'd see us through, but he'll want his pound of flesh."

The girl began to sob. Jim's mind was working rapidly. Eavesdropping has its penalties even though unintentional, and he was instantly gripped by the idea that here at least was an opportunity for the doing good to which he had sworn himself, and one with no danger of any unfortunate repercussion. It was not in the nature of an investment in which he might be victimized nor an attempt at the reorganization of a faulty system of life, but merely in the nature of a loan, or gift if it came to that, to gentlefolk in dire distress. It might save one life dear to others and avert the ruin of another. Then, as if to cement his quickly forming resolution, the girl voiced the very thought which was passing through his own brain.

"Oh! what's the use of friends?" she wailed. "Just think of all the frightfully rich people we know and what they are continually giving to silly char-

ities. Why can't people of our class stand by each other in moments like this? Why isn't there some rich disinterested person with enough imagination to appreciate that there's nobody who needs help like those in our position on the edge of the precipice?"

"Well, my friends all got stuck in that oil venture and blame me for it, though I stated it was a straight gamble, and dad's friends have already been taxed the limit, I fancy, and mother's friends would tattle and give the game away. The money to tide us over wouldn't do us any good if it were to leak out that we were at the end of our string. Besides, people are such brutes. They might be willing to give a poor obscure person a hand up, but they all love to see rich and socially prominent ones likes ourselves come a cropper."

"But it's so cruel," sobbed his sister. "What harm have we ever done to anybody?"

"None," answered her brother bitterly, "and mighty little good. That's where I've missed out. There are one or two men down in Texas I might have helped if I'd had a mind to, but I passed them up, and two of them have since struck it rich. Fifteen hundred and two thousand barrels a day. One of them braced me for five hundred dollars. If I'd let him have it he'd be good to-day for a twenty-thousand-dollar touch, and not even ask for my I O U."

Jim, now bursting with generous impulse, could appreciate the truth of this. For himself things had looked rickety for a while during boring operations, and he could easily imagine how richly he might now reward just such a friendly service.

"Very well," said the girl, and there was a shudder in her voice. "Then I suppose I'm to be the sacrifice. It wouldn't be so bad if I weren't in love with Herbert."

She began to sob again, and Jim

heard the scratch of a match as her brother lighted a cigarette. Jim waited no longer. He rose a little stiffly, and the palmetto crackled as he brushed against it. Looking across the growth he met the eyes of a young Vandergoote fastened on him with horror and a rising anger. The girl looked up and stifled a little scream.

CHAPTER XII.

"I beg your pardon," said Jim. "I was taking a nap here and your voices woke me up—about five minutes ago."

Vandergoote's eyes were steely. "About five minutes ago?" said he. "Don't you think that you might have made a noise?"

"I'd already heard enough to make it embarrassing," said Jim frankly, "and I hoped that you would go away. What you've been saying would never have got past me."

The girl was staring at him fixedly. "Then why did you get up?" she asked.

"Because," said Jim quietly, "I happen to be one of those rich people that you were just deploring the lack of."

"What do you mean?" asked her brother, in whose tanned face a dark flush had risen.

"I struck it rich in oil not long ago," Jim answered. "Bored into a gusher and got it under control. I was nearly down to my last dollar when she began to roar. I've heard enough to make me feel like offering to be of service to you."

The brother and sister seemed quite bereft of speech. The girl, in fact, looked frightened, but whether because she thought they had disturbed the slumbers of a lunatic or because, Aladdinlike, she was terrified at the sudden apparition of the beneficent genii, Jim could not have told. Her brother was staring at Jim as though trying to adapt his mind to his startling announcement.

He could understand the offer a little better than his sister because, although unsuccessful in his own venture, he had seen men strike oil and witnessed the various peculiar reactions on different temperaments of sudden, astounding, unexpected, and often unlimited wealth. In some cases this produced a numbed, awed condition; others it seemed to appall. Others were unable to rise mentally to the actuality of their powers and continued to plod on in the same parsimonious or economical way, buying perhaps some one insignificant object, heretofore the height of their imaginings, the limit of their conceptions of wealth—a flivver—a gramophone—a plush or golden-oak parlor suite—or painted their entire premises. But there were also these rare ones of donative impulse, who loved to give for the sake of giving; and here, as he looked at Jim's eager boyish face, it seemed to him that Heaven had opened its portals and shed one of these, as in old legends.

But he restrained from leaping on this opportunity perhaps from some instinct that it is not well to grapple with a god, nor to snatch at Fortune's wheel when rolling in the right direction.

"Your offer rather takes my breath away," said he, "but I'm afraid you don't quite realize what you'd be letting yourself in for."

Jim smiled. "I can form a pretty good guess," said he. "I paid my own bill last night, and at first glance at the total I thought there must be another James Gladstone who had rented a wing of the hotel and been entertaining royalty."

"James Gladstone?" The girl stared at him with a light of recognition in her eyes. "Are you the James Gladstone that had that Girls' Vacation Home at Piney Head?"

"The same," Jim answered. "Let me tell you about it."

He seated himself near her on a fallen pine, and in a few brief words

described his previous adventures in doing good, including that of the sea island and the duel.

The pair listened to him in more astonishment than amusement, and when he had finished Duane Vandergoote struck his thigh a ringing slap with his hand.

"Good Lord," said he, "and after all that you still want to help people out of a mess?"

"That's one of the reasons," said Jim. "I'm a stubborn sort of cuss about some things, and I want to beat the game."

"But I don't believe you quite realize how deeply we're in. It's not merely a matter of a few hundreds; you see we're rather extravagant people, I'm afraid, and never learned the trick of bargaining."

"I've rather got out of it myself," said Jim. "It doesn't take long when you never had it badly. Suppose you give me an idea of what it would take to see you through the present crisis."

Duane reached in his pocket and drew out a document which at first glance one might have thought to be a contractor's estimate for building a summer home at Greenwich.

"That's the damage up to date," said he.

Jim glanced at it, raised his eyebrows, then laughed. "I'm glad I'm rich," said he. "I might want to marry and bring my family here one day, and this gives me something to go on. I believe I'm also guilty of having overheard you say you had some gambling debts."

"Quite so," Duane admitted. "A few of the chaps here hold my I O U's for a little over two thousand."

Jim drew out the check book which in his quest never left his person, replacing, as his father had aptly remarked, the consecrated sword of the Knights of the Round Table. Adding a third to the monumental bill, he looked at Duane inquiringly.

"Duane Vandergoote," murmured the young man.

Jim filled and signed the check, then rose and handed it to him with a bow.

"I'm pleased and honored to render you this service," said he. "You may, of course, consider it a friendly loan, but don't let that part of it worry you. Don't try to say anything about it just now." He turned and looked at the girl with a smile.

"I hope that it will all come out right, and that you never have to marry Mr. Hartwell," said he. "It's bad enough not to be able to marry the person whom you love. I know because I happen to be in love myself. You can thank me by doing the same thing for somebody when the chance falls your way."

And, picking up his stick, he bowed again, and walked off slowly down the winding path.

Jim did not tell Margaret Dudley of this last benefaction. He had a vague feeling that she would disapprove it; that she would deny the right or title to such considerable assistance in the case of folk like these who normally would spend enough in a day for their selfish pleasure and luxury to provide the needs of a poor deserving family for a month—or incidentally to feed the hungry little mouths of her own fold for half that length of time.

But Jim saw it differently. His initial object had been to relieve distress as he encountered it in his walkings up and down, without reference to merit or circumstance, and this was something which had to be achieved in proportion to the conditions of the sufferer or sufferers. Kings may suffer as bitterly as beggars; Cræsus may endure more agonizing pangs than Lazarus; but these could not be relieved as those of Lazarus might be. Jim reasoned it somewhat in this way. He might not have subscribed to a charity for equip-

ping a vessel to cruise about in search of castaways, but if he personally were to have fallen in with castaways, he would have shared with them ration for ration and stitch for stitch to the last of his food and water and bodily covering, and it would have made no difference whether they were of the cabin or the forecastle.

So now he saw in these people whom he had offered to tide through their crisis, a family of castaways not only in distress but bitter danger of death, and in the case of Evelyn a life rather worse than that. Meager assistance would have done them no good, so he had relieved their necessities in proportion to their need.

Late in the afternoon, while changing for dinner, a bell boy brought him a note from Mrs. Vandergoote requesting that if convenient he call at her suite. Jim did so, and found her alone. Her eyes showed traces of tears.

"I wonder if you quite realize what you have done, Mr. Gladstone?" she asked.

"I hope so, Mrs. Vandergoote," Jim answered.

"My husband is one of the few American financiers who suffered heavily from the war instead of profiting by it. He has been making a hard fight to weather the storm, and at this moment has every hope of doing so, if the immediate crisis can be passed. But his liabilities are enormous, and he is carrying tremendous loans. The slightest reflection on his credit at this moment would be fatal—precipitate a catastrophe. This situation has developed since we came here, and we have remained simply because the means were lacking to settle our account and go."

"I gathered this from what I unintentionally overheard," said Jim.

"Your act," said Mrs. Vandergoote, "has probably averted not only our financial ruin but actual tragedy, besides the wreck of my daughter Evelyn's life

happiness. I don't think that my husband would have survived the crash. He is a proud man and, if I must admit it, a desperate gambler, who may have placed even his life on the stake. Of course we are not out of the woods yet, but for some reason I feel that the danger is past." She stepped to Jim and took both his hands in hers, her eyes filled with tears. "You darling boy," she said. "Such acts as yours do not happen for nothing; I have been a very bitter woman for these past few months, but you have brought back not only my lost faith in human kindness, but my faith in God."

CHAPTER XIII.

Jim went to dinner feeling happier than since he had seen the oil gush over the derrick under which he had sunk the comparatively small inheritance from his maternal grandfather. He longed to tell Margaret of what had happened, but felt that he could not do so in justice to the Vandergootes.

For the next few days his interest in the immediate future fortunes of these people to whom he had rendered such timely aid was almost equal to that in his own.

Margaret Dudley could not help but observe his peculiar air of excited elation and was puzzled by it. Jim was presented to the other Vandergoote daughters and, never thinking in his unsophistication what significance Margaret might ascribe to his doing so, he invited the Vandergootes and Margaret several times for excursions aboard the *Vagabondia*, which was anchored in the lagoon. Neither did he observe that in the course of these sails Margaret was very subdued, and that there was a look of understanding in her deep violet eyes as they observed the almost affectionate bearing of this distinguished family toward their host.

But Jim, not having the hide of the

Florida alligator, could not help but feel her growing reserve. It seemed to him that their sympathies from having so closely approached were, for some distressing reason, growing subtly apart. Their talks together were more formal, less confidential, and but little was said upon that topic previously of greatest interest to them both—the problem of doing good.

Jim began to fear dismally that the delightful softening of Margaret's attitude toward him of the first week of his sojourn must have been due to her weakened physical condition, and that now, with returning health and vigor, she was growing back into herself with that serene self-sufficiency she had shown on their previous meetings. He began to despair of ever winning her heart, and one day when seized by a sort of panic at this idea he had confided in Evelyn Vandergoote, with whom he had come to be on terms of almost brotherly intimacy.

This discerning and thoroughly sophisticated damsel turned away her head to smile.

"Don't worry, Jim," said she, "it's going to be all right."

"What makes you think so?" he asked.

"I don't think anything about it. I know it."

"How do you know it?"

"A sea bird whispered it."

"Well, I wish your blooming bird would whisper it to me."

"You'll do a little whispering yourself, one of these days. Listen, Jim. Margaret is not one of those girls that you can take by storm. She's like a proud little walled city that will not surrender until convinced that to do so would be for the greatest good of the garrison."

"I felt that all the time," said Jim. "That's the reason I've gone so slowly about it. Besides I don't know much about girls."

"Men like you don't need to. The girls know about them."

"She knows that I'm a well-meaning fool."

"She knows better than that. But she may want to subject you to the acid test a little, now that you've been so thoroughly smelted in your high endeavor."

"Do you think she really cares for me a little?"

"More than that. She's nearly ready to be crazy about you, and when such a girl lets herself go, it's rather like kicking a hole in the Croton Dam. But it's not going to hurt her any to see you appreciated a little. All you've got to do, my dear, is to sit tight and bide your time."

"I'm afraid Duane may cut me out."

"A dozen Duanes couldn't cut you out. No doubt he'd try if it were anybody but you, because Duane is not entirely a fool. But under the circumstances he'd soon kill himself, and if he didn't, I'd do it for him. Oh, Jim, listen——"

"Listening——"

"I think we're nearly across the shoals. Mother got a splendid letter from dad last night. We may get a wire any moment to say that he has wound up his deal, and that we're all back on terra firma."

And then that evening the wire came. Jim had wandered out after dinner to look for Margaret, who had not appeared at her customary table. It was a glorious night with a great moon nearly full, about on a level with the high palm fronds, the edges of which were silvered as the brilliant rays struck down from them. People, like lower animals, are never long in a place without having their particular haunts. Jim knew that Margaret's was at a certain turning of a path where, between the bolls of the big royal palms, one got a charming vista of the sea and was seldom disturbed by noisy groups.

He turned his steps in this direction, and, on drawing near the spot, failed to observe two details of vital importance to a young man who has nerved himself up to the point of coming to a positive understanding with the lady of his choice. One of these was that Margaret had slightly changed her location, for the sake of shelter, from the damp little easterly air fanning in from the sea, and was ambushed, as one might say, behind a great mass of flowering rhododendrons; the other, that he was, himself, being followed at some little distance by a graceful girlish wraith in gauzy-white tulle, with bare flashing arms and carrying a scrap of paper in her hand.

Jim paused to look about, disappointed at finding the spot vacant. Margaret, watching him, waited to see if he could sense her near presence, and at that moment Evelyn, following, stole softly up from behind and reaching out her hands placed them over his eyes.

Jim did not move. He guessed who it was and guessed also at the errand which had brought her.

"Evelyn!" he said, and turned; and as he did so the bare arms slipped around his neck and he found himself being rapturously kissed.

"Oh, Jim," whispered Evelyn, almost in a sob, "it's come."

"The telegram?"

"Yes. It's all right. Our troubles are all over."

Jim clasped her about the waist and kissed her in return.

"Thank God!" said he fervently, then stepped back and took both her hands in his.

"Mother wants to see you right away," said Evelyn.

They started back together toward the hotel. A few minutes later another figure followed by the same path, walking slowly and with drooping head. Margaret went to her rooms and rang for her nurse.

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"I think I've had enough of this place, Elsie," said she. "I'd like to take the morning train for home. Please go down and see if you can get a state-room."

Having failed to find Margaret, Jim could scarcely wait for the following day. He was particularly late because he felt that at last he had defeated the jinx which so far had injected a squirt of poison to each of his attempts at doing good. This toxin, increasing its virulence with each successive effort until Jim had been obliged to admit that were the geometric progression to continue, his next would have to be nothing short of fatal in order to preserve its due mathematical ratio.

On awakening he lay for some time stretching luxuriously, and in that state of blissful relaxation which comes of vigor fully restored and the anticipation of a perfect day for the enjoyment of which there is no particular hurry. Evelyn had said the night before that there was no longer any reason why he should not tell Margaret of the service he had rendered their family. Duane had settled the mere pecuniary obligation with a draft on his father's firm, and Jim had himself received a letter from Mr. Vandergoote in which he requested the honor of acting as Jim's host on his return to New York, when he hoped to express in some measure his appreciation of the service rendered.

It never entered Jim's head to expect any particular credit from Margaret for an act of impulsive generosity, that he knew would be taken for granted between them, because it was merely in a manner of speaking, his profession, her profession—a profession which it was his ardent hope to practice with her jointly some day. It would no more have occurred to him to expect praise for having come to the rescue of the Vandergootes than the captain of a

well-found ship would expect praise from a fellow master mariner for having picked up and taken aboard in mid-ocean a boatload of castaways. In the same way a distinguished surgeon would look for no particular commendation from a confrère for having succored the victims of a railroad accident on a train on which he happened to be traveling. But if this surgeon had by the employment of his skill and judgment saved a life or two by an impromptu operation which his confrère held to be impossible under the existing circumstances, he would feel naturally elated about it and entitled to praise.

This precisely expresses Jim's feeling in the matter. He had done something which Margaret had averred was most difficult if not impossible to achieve. This was to render pecuniary aid to sound and able-bodied adults with no financial or ethical damage. And the amazing part of it was that they were about the last people in the world that the average person would have considered as in need of or entitled to such assistance, while if any damage had been done by his act, Jim could not conceive wherein it lay—at that moment.

He breakfasted in his rooms, and about ten o'clock went out in search of Margaret, chuckling a little at what he considered to be his triumph over her. She was nowhere to be found, so after an hour's vain search he went out aboard the *Vagabondia* till luncheon time. Terence, to whom he confided the result of his last adventure in doing good, looked rather grave.

"Tis a fine thing, sor," said he, "to help such gentlefolk when in a hole, but I will be feeling better about it when ye have told Miss Dudley the whole story and hear what she has to say."

A little chill struck through Jim. "What do you mean?" he asked sharply.

His faithful henchman drew down his grizzled bushy eyebrows.

"Has it not struck ye, sor, that 'tis possible Miss Dudley may be a little jealous?"

"Jealous?" cried Jim. "Good Lord, why should she be jealous?"

"'Tis the way of womankind, sir. I mind how she was watchin' the young ladies, and particular Miss Evelyn, the last time we went for a sail. Might she not be thinkin' there was some other raison beyond that of the doin' good which she knew nothin' about which led to the pleasant relations between yourself and these swell folk."

Jim stared at him in dismay. "Je-hoshaphat! I never thought of that. You mean that she may have thought I had a special interest which was not entirely philanthropy."

"So it might have looked even to an old bonehead like meself, sor."

Jim stared at him for a moment, then made a break for the side. "Set me ashore, quick," said he.

Terence complied when Jim rushed up to the hotel at a speed which tested fully the inflated lung. Going to the desk, he was about to ask if Miss Dudley were in her room, when the clerk handed him a note. Jim, recognizing Margaret's writing, ripped it open and read as follows:

DEAR JIM: Things have not been running entirely to my satisfaction at the Home. Being now quite well, I have suddenly decided that I ought not to absent myself any longer. I am leaving by this morning's train. I shall try to see your father in New York and give him the good news of your splendid recovery. For some reason I have a feeling that I am soon to hear of your being done a great deal of good yourself. And surely there is nobody who more deserves it. With all best wishes for your happiness,

MARGARET DUDLEY.

Jim read this note thrice through before its deeper meaning got its full reaction. Then, having glimpsed Evelyn on the terrace, he tore out in that direction with a haste which disregarded intervening animate objects. He found

the girl chatting with a group of friends, but at sight of his wild face she excused herself and led him out of earshot.

"Mercy, Jim! Whatever's happened?"

Jim thrust the note at her as if it had been a dagger.

"Read that!" said he sepulchrally. "I knew that there'd be a jinx in it somewhere."

Evelyn read the note and stared at him aghast. Then she burst into a peal of laughter.

"That settles it, Jim. You've got her hooked."

"Hooked?"

"I'll say so. She's swallowed the mullet, hook, sinker, and float. She's torn off at the end of a long line, but she's good and fast. All you've got to do now is to reel her carefully in. Ever fish for tarpon, Jim?"

"No, thank God, since you seem to think this is a similar outdoor sport."

Evelyn reflected for an instant, while Jim watched her in the silent agony of the novice, who fears that he has committed an irreparable error.

"Listen, Jim, I'll go in and write to her. The letter will go North on your train."

"My train?"

"Yes. You are leaving on this afternoon's flyer."

"Oh, am I? Of course I am."

"Of course. If it's full up you can buy another car, or a special train or something."

"I'll get an airplane."

"Well, do that if you like, but there's no such desperate hurry. It would be better that she got my letter first and had a chance to think it over a little. It will give her time to realize how unjust she's been."

"There's something in that," Jim admitted. "She's owned up to having been that once or twice before."

"So much the better. That noble young woman is going to do a lot of

thinking when she's read what I shall I have to say."

"But are you sure you want to tell her all that, Evelyn?"

"I certainly do. I should like to proclaim it from the housetops. It can't do the slightest harm now, as mother got a letter from dad this morning in which he said that he had everything nailed down and clamped on the inside. He's not going to get caught like that again. Now you get going. What are you going to do with your boat?"

"I'll lend her to Duane until I come back to get her."

"Well, Duane will know what to do with her. Now start and go."

"I'm off," said Jim.

CHAPTER XIV.

There are in the lives of most people certain moments of self-discouragement which is not directed against the whims of fortune or any especial recent error of judgment or behavior, but is rather a sort of general disgust of self as an impersonal individual, his or her methods, point of view, and especially final results.

Margaret Dudley was in one of those moods this dreary February afternoon. She had returned directly to the home, where a certain number of children were housed during the winter, little orphans, or those whose parents were ill and home conditions wretched. They were all in the playroom and happily oblivious to the dismal February thaw.

Margaret, in her cozy little suite before a cheerful open fire of apple stumps, looked out at the snow beginning to fall again in great flakes and the grim leaden sky etched with the straggling branches of locust trees and under them the highway, a sort of *mer de glace*, with great frozen ruts in what had been snow, but was now weeping ice, and compared her surroundings with those softly tempered ones she had

so abruptly quitted. It was borne in upon her that she had done a silly thing. Her nurse had caught a bad cold and was in bed with a temperature. The Home had really been excellently administered by her efficient staff, and it struck Margaret that there was actually no more reason for her being there at that moment than for her having named it after a brave man—if a bit of a fraud in his sentimental relations, as brave men often are—who was the recent fiancé of another girl.

Margaret was feeling lonesome, discouraged, and depressed, and there was a flood of tears flanking her violet eyes.

"They are *all* frauds," she muttered bitterly to herself, visualizing the picture of Jim standing in the silvery filtered moonlight with Evelyn in his arms. She could hear again the girl's ecstatic voice: "Oh, Jim—it's come—father's telegram. Mother wants to see you right away."

A wave of anger swept through Margaret. And to think that just before this Jim had been making love to her if not in speech at least unmistakably in all other ways, in tone and gesture and the caressing expression of his eyes.

"Yes," muttered Margaret to herself. "They are frauds—all—all."

She looked out the window at the forlorn prospect. There had not even been that day a post, no letters, newspapers or magazines—not even bills to distract her mind. The terrible condition of the roads had discouraged the rural delivery. Even the postman's faithful flivver had panted out its soul at the foot of Turner's Hill, this a glare of wet ice and fearful frozen gullies. Then a moving object down the impassible trail caught her eye. She discovered this to be a young lad mounted on a shaggy farm horse with a postman's bag slung over his shoulders. He turned in at the Home, and Margaret in great relief at this interruption of her bad quarter hour, touched her bell.

"Give that deserving youth a dollar and a cup of coffee and a whole pie," said she to the attendant at her door. "But first bring up the mail."

The order was executed to the tremendous satisfaction of all parties, but especially that of Margaret, who picked immediately from her sheaf of letters one sent by special delivery which had occasioned the valiant effort at communication with the frozen world. She did not recognize Evelyn's handwriting, but she saw the Palm Beach postmark and ripped it open with fingers which trembled a little and proceeded to devour its contents with gluttony.

Evelyn had missed no detail. It was a witty letter, but charged with fervent heartbeats, and it wound up with the announcement of her engagement to one Herbert Spooner, architect, of New York. It was a funny letter, but Margaret did not laugh. She laid it on her knee, and the tears ran from her violet eyes in a little stream, and at that moment the sun broke through a rift of the gray lee set and swept the bleak landscape with a resplendent glory.

But this was not all. From far in the distance came the hoarse, disgruntled blare of an outraged motor car, the complaint, not as though made to clear the road, for indeed there was no road and no traffic on it to clear, but as though in protest that any ground-traversing fabric of mechanical device should be called upon to strain and labor over earth's irregular surface in what was only airplane weather.

Margaret's heart went off like an alarm clock. Although Evelyn had given no hint of Jim's departure from the shade of the sheltering palms, some sixth sense seemed to tell Margaret that he was not far away. Perhaps, also, she reasoned subconsciously, that only a lover would ever try to navigate a car of a size commensurate with so bass a bellow over that *Chemin des Pas Perdus*.

Then, as if to verify her instinct, the big roadster hove in sight, pitching and slewing as it crawled along, like a gleaming yacht working to windward in a cross chop.

Margaret sprang to her feet, threw open a window and looked out. She snatched a pair of field glasses from the mantel and focused them. It was Jim and two others, for he had brought with him a wrecking crew, and the back of the car was full of spare parts.

The day assumed suddenly glorious dimensions. Margaret was startled to catch a glimpse of her radiant face in the old looking-glass. She began to skip around in a demented sort of way, snatched a fresh blouse from her wardrobe, then put it back again. She gathered up the loose tendrils of her wavy black hair, which had the deep luster of some ruddy-hued object in the dark. She examined her eyes to see if they were red-rimmed, which they were not, and their violet depths glowed at her as though there was a fight ahead.

The big car blared again, like a steamboat coming up to a wharf in a fog, and the hoarse note sent a sort of quiver through the girl. Jim was apparently warning the gateposts to draw back and give him room. He bumped in over a frozen drift, and was lost to sight around the corner of the house. Margaret sat down again and tried to compose herself and keep her heart from acting foolishly.

For the high gods, as if to compensate for the practical jokes they had been playing on Jim since having enriched him, now steered him to Margaret at a time and place which could not have been more opportune. No glamour of the tropic, no soft airs and spicy odors could possibly have rendered her as vulnerable as the dreary aspect of that late wintry New England countryside and the depression which she had just passed through. Moreover, it was her home, he was her

guest, and there could be no questioning his claim to hospitality. She reflected that to have got there so soon, coming from New York in that big car over such terrific roads, he must have left Palm Beach the same day as herself, and then traveled *some*. She wondered how he had managed it, and was conscious of an overwhelming admiration for the costly fabric which had stood the strain.

There was the sound of voices from below in which she recognized Jim's cheerful, boyish, lilting tones, and they sounded to Margaret in the accents of some sylvan demigod. She felt instantly for some reason much older than he, although there was but a month in Jim's favor between their ages.

Then, at the sound of footsteps outside the door, Margaret became suddenly and hopelessly demoralized. To express her condition exactly, she was "badly rattled." The suite which she occupied consisted of the office where she had been sitting, her bedroom, and its adjoining boudoir and bath. Downstairs there was a formal reception room, but Margaret shrank from the idea of receiving him there.

An attendant rapped at the door, and Margaret made a frantic effort to compose herself.

"Mr. Gladstone is asking for you, Miss Dudley," said the young woman.

"Please tell Mr. Gladstone that I'll be—no, ask him to come up here."

"Mr. Gladstone" had heard the order, and did not wait for its delivery. Taking two of the little old-fashioned stairs at a stride, he passed the attendant in the hall. She arrested her downward course and looked back to see what sort of collision was going to occur. It is probable that she saw.

Jim strode down the hall. Margaret was standing in the doorway, and, as if to enhance unnecessarily the glory of her to Jim's vision, the late sun took good aim with one of its horizontal

beams and shot it through the western window of the study to edge Margaret's charming figure all about with gold. To Jim she looked like some sort of a golden goddess of all sufficiency—the ultimate end and objective of his quest. He walked straight up to her, with singular fearlessness for one of his modest nature, and Margaret's defenses being wide open as she poised herself on the threshold, with either hand on the casing of the open door, Jim did not hesitate to take advantage of it.

He walked straight up to her and his arms went round her before she could let fall her own. He drew her close and Margaret, like a proud prisoner taken in her last trench, did not resist. Her head fell forward on his shoulder and Jim, without shame and without reproach, possessed himself of her sweet face.

"There, thank God!" said he. "I've got you at last. You'll never get away from me again."

"You see, dad," said Jim, a few days later, "we have come to a sort of compromise. I can't go knight-erranting around the country any more, because my wife is a lady of strong domestic tastes and has also the Home to run. But a babies' home, while unquestionably the finest of charities, does not offer precisely the employment best suited for a young and active man who is not a doctor. So dopping the thing out between us, we've decided that Margaret is to look after the beginning of the mortal span, while I busy myself with the end of it."

Doctor Gladstone's eyes twinkled. "That sounds rather somber," said he. "Are you going to build a model cemetery?"

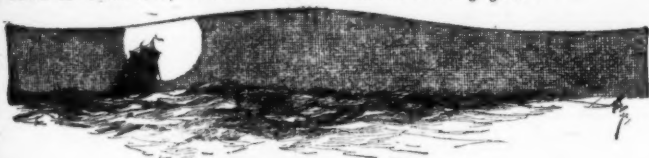
"No—that would be after the end of it. Besides an honest parson must live. I'm going to found an Old People's Home and name it after mother. You can't pauperize kiddies because they're

too young, and you can't do any harm to people over sixty-five or seventy because they're too old. So we figure that in this way we ought to be able to do a lot of good, and manage to keep out of trouble."

"The idea is excellent," said Doctor

Gladstone, "but if I am any judge of womankind, you will soon be starting a very young people's home, particularly your own."

Jim laughed. "Well, after all," said he, "you can't beat that much in the cause of *doing good*."



HIDDEN FLAME

FOR her the valley, not the height;
 Small daily tasks and firelight
 Upon a lonely hearth. She led
 A meek existence, calm and chaste;
 Life's brimming cup she did but taste,
 Nor drain it to its dregs, wine red.

Only, when the embers died,
 White, at that lone fireside,
 Some mysterious force that came,
 Swept her spirit like a flame.

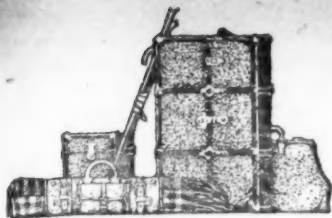
Alone she journeyed on her way
 From life's white morn, till shadows lay
 Across her sunset path; her brow
 Like yellowed marble, and her hands
 That never wove love's rainbow strands,
 Grown frail as broken flowers now.

Yet her heart cried: "Is not thine,
 O night wind, a soul like mine;
 Too disconsolate for tears,
 With the passion of the years?"

Men thought, in wonder viewing her,
 "In that calm breast no passions stir;
 A soul is hers of dew and snow;
 Her every thought, a crystal cool,
 And foam-white lily by a pool,
 For nature has decreed it so."

"Hear me, storm-torn earth!" cried she;
 "We are kindred, kindred we!
 Where the crashing thunders roll
 Is the secret of my soul!"

MARY BRENT WHITESIDE.



The Week-End Guest

By Marie Van Vorst

Author of "Big Tremaine,"

"Mary Moreland," etc.

FROM the room where Patricia Hereford's wedding gifts were displayed, the Long Island Sound was visible, and it lay in the distance on this October day, blue as a patch of cornflowers. Down at the dock the yacht waited to take the master of the house to town. Underneath the window in kilts, bare legs, bagpipes and all, a Highland shepherd, imported by the lady of the house from his native heather because he was picturesque, watched his sheep and was homesick to the bone! The twenty-five Southdown sheep were astoundingly clean and moved about in patches on the flawless lawn. Now and again the wretched piper played a few Scotch melodies as he was paid to do, and the lady of the house listened to the piper's tunes with her pencil on her lips as she prepared for the detective a list of the wedding presents.

"What melody is Sandy playing now, Nell?"

One of the bridesmaids, a girl who was staying in the house, perched nonchalantly on a table, a notebook and a pencil in her hands. Miss Moore was helping Mrs. Hereford list the wedding presents, and presumably Miss Cynthia Moore was thinking of her own wedding, when it should come to pass, as bridesmaids will! She dictated to Mrs. Hereford.

"Number one thousand and six, Nell, a pigskin purse from Eric Johnson. Pat's own chauffeur, isn't he?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hereford, "nice of him and in perfectly good taste."

Miss Moore swung to and fro a foot encased in a correct golf brogue. She was the champion woman golfer of the Eastern States, and came downstairs in the morning dressed for golf, ready for her game. Indeed she said she only put on evening dress in order to keep out of social jail!

"That's the nicest thing I have heard you say about any of the presents, Nell! If people who sent them could only hear you!"

The lady of the house shrugged.

"I have always wondered why certain frightful things were manufactured and now I know they are for wedding gifts. The boring part is that over a thousand people will have to be lied to and thanked! Poor Patricia!"

There they were, over a thousand wedding presents! Patricia Hereford was a popular debutante and her father the best host on Long Island. Everything that indifferent taste could select and money pay for, from Hereford's own gift of diamonds to the modest pigskin purse, was here displayed. One of the most truly beautiful things was a pink Persian prayer rug of rich soft tones, a Persian proverb in delicate lettering running around the border. It hung on the wall opposite the pearls and the valuable jewels. Two rooms on the second floor of the big country house had been consecrated to this exhibition, and the presents were to be seen by the guests on the following afternoon, after the wedding.

"Mr. Jones is downstairs in the fur room," Mrs. Hereford said, "but his

men have not come up from Waybrook, and I thought he had better stay with the sables and the silver fox. We must not budge from here until they come, but you can go to Pat if you like, Cinnie. I'll stay on." The lady of the house glanced out at the Highland piper and his astoundingly clean sheep on the lawn.

"There!" exclaimed Miss Moore. "That's the tune I mean, Nell! What is it—do you know? Hear it and weep, don't you think so?"

Mrs. Hereford hummed the tune through, accompanied by the melancholic piper from without.

"Jolly!" exclaimed Cynthia from her table. "Jolly in your adorable voice! Are there any words that go with it or is it only a sob and a wail?"

"Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands oh! Where have you been?"

They have slain the Earl of Moray and laid him on the green.

He was a braw gallant and he rode for the glove,

And the gallant Earl of Moray he was the Queen's love;

And long shall the Lady look from the Castle down

To hear the Earl of Moray go stounin' through the Town."

Mrs. Hereford's really beautiful voice filled the gift room with its sweetness.

"I'll catalogue wedding presents indefinitely," said Miss Moore, "if you'll go on like that. Anyhow, Nell, he is the Queen's Love all right!"

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Hereford sharply.

"Captain Ramsay. He is crazy about you."

Mrs. Hereford had been comparing her list with that of Miss Moore. She went over to the window, looked out until the red died from her face, and said over her shoulder:

"Go on with your list, Cinnie, and don't be a goose."

The girl wrote diligently for a few

moments. Mrs. Hereford returned to the table where the pigskin purse reposed between the red lacquer box, on which the card read: "Maharajah of Singapore," and a sapphire ring on the other side.

"I am awfully sorry for you, Nell, you'll miss Pat beyond words, shan't you?"

"Yes," said the lady of the house, "to-morrow night I shall be utterly alone."

"How nice for your husband!" Miss Moore laughed. "Where is poor old Tommy going, anyway?"

"Nowhere," said the lady of the house coolly. "I mean *we* will be all alone."

Mrs. Hereford was twenty years younger than her husband. She had never asked herself so often before, how she was going to be able to entertain the prospect of endless luncheons and endless dinners opposite Tommy Hereford.

"Entirely alone," she murmured again, walking down the long line of presents. From the splendid pearls she came back to Eric Johnson's purse and stood near it as though something drew her to that special spot. She had not married Hereford to bring up his children, she was only a little older than they. She had been a sister to them during the five years of her married life and Jack Hereford, who was unpopular with his father, adored his step-mother.

"Why did you marry your husband, Helen?" Cynthia Moore asked laughingly, but she did wonder with all her might. Since she had known the two she had never been able to understand the union.

Mrs. Hereford, leaning with one hand on the gift table, the other playing with her long rope of pearls, said absently.

"Oh, there must be twenty reasons why!"

"And you can't think of one!" exclaimed the girl.

On the hard floor of the next room fell the footsteps of some one coming quickly toward them.

"Listen, Nell," laughed the girl who was staying in the house, "the Earl of Moray is stounin' through the town! You'll miss him, too, when he goes tomorrow! I am awfully sorry for him."

"Hello, Captain Ramsay!" she said. "Come and take my place and list these things with Mrs. Hereford." She held out the book and the pencil to him. She understood many things.

Since Ramsay had come to Waybrook ten days before with Jack Hereford, he had scarcely spoken a word to any one; scarcely looked at any one but the lady of the house, and his absorption in her was dangerously charming to a woman not in love with her husband.

"You don't have to stay in the house all morning, do you, Mrs. Hereford?" he asked eagerly. Ramsay wore the uniform of the Blank Flying Corps, and his breast was full of stars.

"Yes, Miss Moore and I are on guard here, and I wish you would do something for me, will you, like an angel?"

Ramsay mechanically picked up the pigskin purse.

"I have got one like this," he said, "it doesn't look like a wedding present! I have carried mine through the war and it is as empty now as it was then," he laughed.

"Please, please!" urged the lady of the house, "do run down to the graperies where we were yesterday——"

Ramsay interrupted.

"I wanted to go with you now, Mrs. Hereford, down there; can't we?"

"I am on guard. If anything were stolen from this room, Cynthia and I would be responsible. I am making up a lunch basket for Patricia. She is crazy about Hamburg grapes and I want to put some in."

"You only want to send me away," he laughed. "I never went on so many distant errands in my life! Isn't there something you want in New York?"

"I do want the grapes!"

She wanted to get him from under the clever scrutiny of Cynthia Moore, and after he had gone out of the room, reluctant in every move of his body, Miss Moore asked.

"What do you know about Captain Ramsay?"

The bridesmaid had a fashion of putting questions when she was interested in anything with a frank abruptness, at once alluring and embarrassing.

"Not much, just picturesque things," said the lady of the house. "There's the last item, Cinnie, diamond pendant, value four thousand dollars."

Cynthia Moore scrutinized her list. "All right! We have varied it agreeably! We began with 'gift of the bridegroom, one hundred thousand dollars,' and we drift along to a pigskin purse, value one dollar fifty, I should say, and close with a medium note, a little four thousand! Tell me about Ramsay."

Miss Moore had arrived the day before, coming back with the Herefords from the races, to a large house party of which Jack Hereford, son of the house, home from France, and Captain Ralph Ramsay were part.

"Jack's crazy about him," said Mrs. Hereford. "He is Jack's best friend."

"M!" murmured Miss Moore. "Excuse me, my dear! You have a soft spot in your heart for Jack. I don't understand it—I never have."

Mrs. Hereford went on.

"They have been together for two years in France in the same sector. Captain Ramsay is an ace with a ripping record, as you know."

"No," returned the bridesmaid, giving her book up to Mrs. Hereford, "I don't know anything about him."

Miss Moore was an unusually under-

standing young person; some people said she had ten senses where others have only seven.

"Well!" said the lady of the house. "He is quite poor; lots of nice people are. He is from the West as you can hear by his accent."

"No one has a chance to hear much of his accent but you! He never speaks to any one else."

"Ridiculous!" said the lady of the house. "Jack told me that every one in the sector from the mascot to the colonel was crazy about Ralph, and as you see, he has all the medals that can be won."

"Too bad he couldn't have worked off a few on Jack," said Cynthia. "Jack is as bare as a bone, and his father seems to have it in for him harder than ever! What has Jack done since he was demobilized, Nell?"

Mrs. Hereford shook her head.

"Don't ask me! My husband doesn't like my interference. I learned that and I don't try to know. Jack is going to California to-morrow. He is going on with aviation, and I hope will go into the United States army for good. I hope he will."

"Too bad!" murmured Miss Moore. For in her kind and understanding heart there was a very warm place for the master of the house. "Too bad such a fine man as Tommy should have a son like Jack."

"You are very unfair to him," said the lady of the house warmly. "I think I am the only one to understand him. I believe the very best of Jack, and I know he'll come out all right. He has a good military record over there."

Miss Moore laughed. "Well, he did not get shot in the back! I know I'm rotten, but—" She came impulsively over to her friend and put her arms around her. "Now the Earl of Moray is another thing! He's all right. You can see his record on his face and on his breast, and I excuse his 'stounin'

through the town' and his entire absorption in another woman—he is all right!"

Cynthia Moore kissed Mrs. Hereford and then went upstairs to Patricia, who had been waiting for her for the last half hour. The lady of the house was not sorry to be alone.

She knew about Ralph Ramsay only what her stepson had told her in his letters from France during the past two years. In these letters Jack Ramsay had been described as "a wonder, a corker, a dare-devil in the air, a chap who defied danger and death, a little bit of all right," and when Jack took the trouble to detail some thrilling event or to tell of fine achievements, Ralph Ramsay would turn out to be the man who had done the thing. In Jack's letters the ace had charmed this imaginative and loveless woman, and his valor and his courage had fascinated her from afar. In her room, on her bureau and on her desk, were numerous snapshots of the two young men, and the ace seemed always to be smiling at her and to be the expression of *la joie de vivre*. He attracted her enormously, and in the little pictures she grew to know every line of his slim body and of his beautiful head. As he waved his cap at the side of a broken machine from which he had landed that time safely, he seemed to wave to her and to greet her.

When her husband came into her little room, if he resented the fact that there were no pictures of himself there and too many of his scapegrace of a son, his good breeding did not allow him to comment on the fact! He showed a friendly approval of Captain Ramsay, however.

"Now there is a fine-looking chap, Nell, and I hope to God he does Jack good. I'd like a son like that!"

But he saw the flying man under different colors when Ramsay appeared at Waybrook. Ramsay came into a

conventional atmosphere with a vivid charm of which no one was unconscious, and if Jack had written that from the mascot to the colonel he was popular in France—he was popular at Waybrook, from the chauffeur by whose side he had sat on the way from the train, to the lady of the house. Not even the big wedding with the rush, excitement, and absorption had been able to cloud over the brightness of the passing of Ralph Ramsay. If he defied danger in the air, the young man defied convention here; and with utter disregard of propriety he fell in love with the lady of the house and took no pains to conceal his passion. Mrs. Hereford remembered what her stepson had said of him: "Women go crazy about Ralph. In the hospital he had the nurses nailed. It was comic, the poor chaps on either side of him stood no chance at all!"

Tommy Hereford, the best host on Long Island, had on this occasion displayed a perfect hospitality! For ten days he watched this young man make love to his wife and did not throw him out! Hereford sincerely loved his wife, and was determined to win her if he could. He had no intention of playing the losing game of a jealous husband!

The day before, to protect Ramsay and to get him away where she could warn him, and try to make him behave, she had snatched half an hour from the rushing day and taken him to the graperies. He had drawn her into his arms and held her in spite of the fact that the gardener was in the next glass house and talking across to Mrs. Hereford. Ramsay had said over the man's voice and over the scent of violets:

"I love you terribly—with every bit of me—thank God I was not smashed up in France before I could tell you this!"

Now she knew he would think of every moment of this. She could never

go into those graperies again without a thrill. Her husband was going to town on the yacht and came in smoking—and holding out two *one-thousand-dollar* bills.

"Nell, I want Patricia to have some pocket money in her dressing case. Slip these in, will you?"

"Tommy," exclaimed his wife, "you never stop, do you?"

"I am glad I don't *have* to stop," said the father, "when it is the case of doing something for my little girl."

"I'll put them in this little leather purse," said Mrs. Hereford and she took up the little pocketbook. "Pat says she is going to take it with her, Tommy, and she'll be frightfully pleased."

He gave her the bills, and Mrs. Hereford slipped them into the little purse.

"Going to leave it there around loose like that?" asked the business man.

"Why not? Jones' men will be here in a minute. Think of the things farther along and what they are worth. There is no one here but ourselves."

Through the other doorway Jack Hereford and Ralph Ramsay came in together. Since he had been at Waybrook, Ramsay had never seen the husband and wife alone together. He stopped short on the threshold, but the son went in.

"I've not been robbing the graperies," Ramsay said. "These are going in your daughter's lunch basket, Mr. Hereford."

"I dare say," nodded the father. "Everything goes with Pat!"

"Look what dad has just given her." Mrs. Hereford held up the purse and the bills. "I am putting them in this little pigskin purse so that if she wants to buy some stamps she'll find them handy."

Jack looked at his father's last generous gift without a word, turned about and went and stood at the window. The piper, who felt he had done as much as his salary demanded, was

silent. With his back to the house he gazed beyond the Sound toward the bonnie hills of Scotland. Ramsay seemed to appreciate the generosity, however.

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed. "Wonderful to be able to do things like that for one's children!"

And he looked from the husband to the wife, but his tone was bitter. Mrs. Hereford had never heard a note like this in his voice. As her husband went out of the room and his son slowly followed him, Mrs. Hereford asked Ramsay:

"Why did you speak so bitterly when my husband gave Patricia his parting gift? It was not like you!"

"Bitterly!" he exclaimed. "My dad threw me out when I was twelve—he married again—I wasn't wanted, and since then I have never known a home. I have knocked about the world. I have never seen a family life and when Jack used to talk of his people I never believed that anything like this existed! And now that I see what it means to a chap, it makes me bitter, that's all!"

"Poor boy!"

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" he hurried. "For God's sake, don't pity me! I don't want to grouch. I have been hungry, I have always been poor, but I've managed to get something of life everywhere! I suppose you'd call me an adventurer."

He threw back his beautiful head and laughed.

"It is a good adventure all right and I am glad I am part of it."

He took her hand, looked down at her with his wonderful frank smile, and with the courage that conquers the world.

"I am glad that all those hard paths have brought me here to you. I have seen a lot of women, but I never cared like this."

She believed it and he kissed her again deeply, deeply, many times; indifferent to the fact that they might

be observed, and how serious it would be for her; but she freed herself saying:

"What madness! This must have its end, you know!"

And he murmured passionately, "Yes, it must have its end, dearest. When can I see you?"

"To-night," she said, "in the music room at twelve—at half past twelve."

Unmistakably some one was coming in the hall. Mrs. Hereford turned and hurriedly left the room.

After she had gone out Ramsay stood motionless beside the long tables. Life, which had been so full of unkindness to him and so full of caprices, seemed at last to have smiled upon him. Only certain moments in the air when above the German lines he had escaped the enemy's barrage and later brought down his black foe—seen him fall, only in moments of such magnitude, had he felt lifted as high as to-day.

Here some one called:

"Nell! Nell, where are you?"

And down through the long room, next where his own eager footsteps had gone "stounin'" on the parquet floor, came Patricia Hereford, the bride, in her wedding dress, looking for her step-mother. She stood hesitatingly on the threshold between the rooms.

"Where's mother, Captain Ramsay?"

Patricia passed for a beauty. She was happy and healthy, lit by young expectancy and young hope and love. White as a lily, and tall as a lily, she stood looking about at her beautiful things as a child might at his Christmas gifts.

"What a crowd of things!" she murmured. "What an awful lot, isn't it? And all for little me." She nodded and laughed. "It will take a thousand years to write letters of thanks for them all. I'll make Nolly do it."

She slowly walked along in front of the presents, lifting a card here, stopping a moment there, only half atten-

tive, half seeing them, having this day more dazzling things than material jewels to think about. She stopped finally, before the pigskin purse lying between the sapphire ring and the lacquer box. The young man who had been thrown out of family life at twelve to fight for his existence, watched this spoiled society girl in her satin dress, surrounded by objects whose value footed up to hundreds of thousands.

"I have not *half* seen the things yet! Aren't they wonderful?"

She picked up the purse.

"This is from my chauffeur. Wasn't it kind of him?"

She opened it mechanically, looked up at Ramsay, and said, laughing:

"Oh, gracious! That's daddy!"

"It was meant for a surprise for you."

"Never mind," she said, "I won't tell. Indeed, if any one asks, I'll swear it was empty." She laughed and put it down again.

"It is great of you, Captain Ramsay, to have watched the presents for me. Thank you a thousand times."

Ramsay looked up at the prayer rug.

"I wish since you are here, Miss Hereford, you'd tell me what the letters around this prayer rug mean! What do they say?"

She thought a minute.

"I have got it written out upstairs somewhere."

It was difficult for the bride to bring her attention to Persian characters.

"As near as I can remember they say:

"To the Great Lover Honor and Dishonor Life and Death are in the hands of the Beloved."

Ramsay nodded. "Great!" he said.

"I like it awfully. It's ripping."

"Hello, Pat!" Her brother stood on the threshold she had crossed. "Hello, people! I have been looking for you, Pat. I have been up to your room."

The two young people, absorbed in

a saying of the Far East, did not answer. Patricia and Ralph stood with their backs to the sapphire ring and the maharajah's red lacquer box and the pigskin purse.

"The Maharajah of Singapore," said Miss Hereford, "gave me wonderful lessons last year in Boston. All the girls were crazy about him. You read from left to right." She pointed with her slender finger of the left hand on which the wedding ring would be very soon. "There like that, see:

"To the Great Lover Honor and Dishonor" on the first line; 'Life and Death are in the hands of the Beloved' on the second line."

The Scotch piper without, on the flawless lawn with his twenty-five astoundingly clean sheep, had decided to take his grazing herd farther along and had gone to the end of the park. From the distance they could hear the tune of his melancholic music as it came to them faintly as they stood there reading the rug.

"And the gallant Earl of Moray he was the queen's love."

"The Great Lover," Ramsay repeated the words; they were fascinating. Oh, it was worth while in life to be a great lover! Ah, he could be it now for her—for her—for the woman he had kissed and held in his arms!

"Mr. Rolland would like to speak to Miss Hereford in her room."

No one but the family was allowed in the gift room and the footman with a message for Patricia from the bridegroom stopped halfway down the next room, and even though she was so near being Mrs. Rolland, the girl blushed at the name and started forward.

"I'll come at once. Captain Ramsay, do find Nell. Ask her to come up to my room. I must see her."

"I can't leave here," said Ramsay. "Jack will tell her. I say, old man——" And he turned round to speak to Jack,

but Hereford had simply crossed the room and gone out by the other door.

As Mrs. Hereford, after leaving Ramsay, went out of the gift room she ran into young Hereford, who caught her arm and drew her toward her own room.

"Nell, come along with me a second, will you?"

Her stepchildren called her by her first name. She was more like a sister than a mother to them. She was always dreading demands of money from Jack, for whenever he wanted either to confess to her or to demand a favor, he made her boudoir a confessional.

Mrs. Hereford was a Southerner, accustomed to a great deal of admiration from young men, and Jack Hereford was especially chivalrous and devoted to her. He might well be, for she had been his defender against his father more than once. Now he put her in a comfortable chair and called in to her maid, who happened to be in the next room.

"Marie, like an angel fetch a couple of cocktails for Mrs. Hereford and me, will you?"

"You should rest, Nell; you've been worn out with all this rush."

When he had made his stepmother comfortable, he lit a cigarette for her, took one himself, and looked around at the photographs of himself and Ramsay.

"Gee, what a lot of me! You framed everything I ever sent you, I guess. Isn't Ralph a corker? Now he's got the good luck to be staying on. I've brought you here, Nell, to say good-by. I've got to go to-day."

She looked at him in surprise.

"You mean to say you are going to miss the wedding?"

"I am awfully cut up about it—military orders, and—honestly, I'm not sorry to get away. Dad has been rotten to me—absolutely rotten!"

The maid brought the two cocktails on a tray. Jack drank his and said half smiling:

"You're a brick, Nell. Ralph will bring me news of everything when he comes. Good-by—don't get too tired. See you at Christmas." He leaned over, kissed her, and went to bid his sister good-by.

The lady of the house, while alone in her room the next few moments, received countless telephone calls and messages. As soon as they knew she was to be found every one came to her. Only after she had dismissed the last messenger could she draw a long breath and remember Ralph in the room beyond.

Ramsay had become a great excitement and a problem. To-morrow he would be gone, however, and to-night she would try to put things on another footing, and in his absence turned to the occupations of her busy social life to try to forget him.

As she passed through the apartment adjoining the gift room, she could see the tables weighed down with their priceless things, and Ralph still alone in front of the maharajah's lacquer box and the sapphire ring opposite the prayer rug on the wall. She could see, too, that in his hands *was the little purse; he was closing it—slipping the strap under the band.* He put it quickly down as he heard her steps and came toward her with a radiant face as though he had no thought beyond the fact that she had come back and alone. She had time only to meet his eyes with a troubled question in her own, for, sharp and alert, Mr. Jones, with one of the other detectives, followed behind her. The three together entered the room where Ramsay stood. Jones said briskly:

"Now, we'll take charge here, Mrs. Hereford, and relieve you, Captain Ramsay."

But the young man paid no more at-

tention to them than if they had been ghosts. He was looking only at the woman whom he had taken lately in his arms.

"Since you went away I have learned to read the writing on the wall."

She did not answer. She was not thinking of Persian characters and Persian rugs.

"Miss Hereford came in her wedding gown. She was looking for you and she read me the writing on the wall."

"I have forgotten what it says."

At the far end of the big room Jones and his man were comparing the lists and checking them.

"I saw Miss Hereford, too," said Jones. "She came to the fur room to tell me about the little pigskin purse with loose cash—two thousand dollars! I told Miss Hereford it was a mistake to let loose cash like that lie around."

And the detective took up the little pocketbook, undid the strap which Mrs. Hereford had just seen Ramsay close. Jones was perfunctory, and he looked into the little purse out of habit. Finding it empty, he held it over to Mrs. Hereford and Ramsay, saying:

"Empty as a drum."

Jones was delighted. He was glad of the snappy little incident, and his man, at the other end of the room, turned round with alacrity at his chief's voice. Captain Ramsay, his hands in his pockets, stood perfectly motionless, looking quietly at the lady of the house. Before he could speak she said:

"Miss Hereford is very careless, and how could she possibly exchange two thousand-dollar bills on her honeymoon. I thought as you did, Mr. Jones, and I told her father before he went to town I had a lot of large bills to pay on the place and I wanted some cash. Mr. Hereford asked me to slip in my own check instead. I left it out on my desk in my boudoir. I'll go and fetch it now."

There was nothing whatsoever to say

to the lady of the house—it was perfectly *en règle*.

"All right," said Jones. "We'll list it properly and it will be much safer."

As the lady of the house went out the detective said to Captain Ramsay: "Now if you want to go off duty?"

The young man even then looked at nothing but the disappearing figure of Helen Hereford. He stared at it as if he wanted to follow her, then wheeled about and went out by the opposite door. He called out to Jones:

"I am going to have a bit of air before luncheon."

How that day passed she never knew. She had gone to Patricia and kissed her under her wedding veil, and there had been the bustle in the busy house—countless things to be done, to be decided—endless messages and calls. No one saw Captain Ramsay or knew where he had gone and, at dinner, when the host asked for him, a manservant answered:

"Captain Ramsay was called over the phone by a brother officer and has gone to the club. He has taken his traps."

"*Après la guerre comme à la guerre!*" said Cynthia Moore. "Manners! That's the Earl of Moray all over!" And she made a grimace at Mrs. Hereford as much as to say: "You packed him off at last, and no wonder."

He had simply fled, and the shame and the degradation sickened her to the soul. He had not given her time to recover from his passionate declarations before he had stolen under her very eyes, one might say, under her very kisses. She was only a mask for him then? How had he dared to touch her? How *had* he dared?

By dinner time she was so overcome by her wretchedness that she was obliged to go to her boudoir to shut herself away. As she saw him on the little photograph by the side of his machine, ready to ascend—and in an

other near the broken wing of a fallen plane after an accident, she thought:

"Far better to have died then than to have come back to this! What must this day have been for him?" All day she disputed with herself, loathing herself one moment, believing him innocent the next.

Her husband had come out to Waybrook early. He, as well as Cynthia Moore, thought that Mrs. Hereford had sent the young man away. Hereford came in to his wife's room just before dinner.

"I'll be glad when all this is over and you can rest."

She looked at him gratefully. He seemed so true and honorable. She turned away that he might not see her tears.

"I am dog tired, Tommy, and I'll be glad, too, when it's all over."

Mrs. Hereford was a true musician, and her husband loved her talent. When she came to Waybrook after her marriage she found the beautiful music room he had created waiting for her. Hereford had copied it from a villa near Cremona in Italy. The woodwork lining the walls had been brought to this American house from a music room whose traditions were hundreds of years old. Besides modern instruments—a phonograph, a harp, and two grand pianos looking at each other from the opposite ends of the room—rare instruments hung on the walls. Before the windows leading out on the porches, fell curtains of Renaissance brocade. The room was rich in tone and full of shadow and charm. The lady of the house had seen Captain Ramsay alone in this room for the first time one evening when a guest in the smoking room beyond had been telling a ghost story.

She and Captain Ramsay had played "Manon," "Butterfly," and Irish songs to make a thrilling accompaniment for

a thrilling tale, but more sincerely to cover what Ramsay was saying to her in his young, eager voice with his young, eager feelings.

As Helen Hereford now came quickly in the music room past midnight she found it was still as death and it seemed to her as nearly ominous.

She walked softly over the thick rugs. The black paneling of the walls made a striking background for her figure in white evening dress. From one of the windows through which streamed October moonlight, the curtains were drawn; and the night, suggesting only beauty and peace, did not seem a proper setting for the story of a crime. During the war she had often stood in this window thinking of Jack Hereford and his friend flying over the enemy's lines. She had looked forward with interest to seeing and knowing this brave man. How little she had imagined there would ever be a moment like this!

How cruel Ralph's need of money must have been in order to have brought him so low as this! Jack had told her that Ramsay was as poor as a rat—with never a cent in his pocket—but Ralph himself had told her more that very afternoon when she had seen in the bitterness on his face a record of his cruel life.

Then he had acknowledged being a castaway and a vagabond. Had he not called himself an adventurer? The fact that he had rushed out of the house was against him. She did not believe that he would come here, and if he did not, she would keep his miserable secret as she would keep secret his kisses which she could not efface.

At the sound of steps on the veranda she went hurriedly to the window to open it herself. As she turned the handle of the French window, Ramsay came in, dressed just as he was when he had gone out that morning to fetch the grapes, in white flannel and white

shoes. Her first expression was maternal as she saw him.

"You will catch a terrible cold. You must be frightfully cold! I am going to fetch you something to drink. There is whisky in the smoking room."

Ramsay's face was white and drawn. He came out in the room only a little beyond the window, his back against the red and gold Renaissance curtain. It framed him with its long lines falling behind him. He seemed to stand between in the folds.

"Pleasel!" he said. "Don't get me anything."

He might have been embroidered on the satin of the curtains. He was moveless and beautiful in his pallor and silence; nevertheless he was only a modern figure, a modern man.

"How could you? How could you?" she breathed. "I did not think you would come to-night and yet I hoped you would"—and she felt her voice desert her—"and explain."

He repeated the word "explain" with a laugh.

"I came back because I wanted to see you—for no other reason."

She interrupted him with a passionate gesture as though she would dismiss her memories and his.

"To see *me* again! *What* can this matter?" In spite of herself she cried, "How horrible! How horrible!" and she covered her face.

He understood that she hated herself because he had taken her in his arms. He looked quietly at her from his greater height, and his expression did not indicate that all day he had been wandering like a hunted animal.

"This is the most dreadful thing that has ever come into my life! Oh! Why *did* you come back?" she cried.

"To see *you*—just to see *you*."

There was a silence between them for a second, and the clock in the hall outside struck one. Ramsay said:

"You are sick with disgust. You are full of regret at—*our love*."

"You think of that first! You think of that first of all!"

"First—second—last and above everything."

"After what I saw this morning every word like that is an insult," Mrs. Hereford said.

Ramsay came forward and caught her hands, saying tensely:

"And the look I saw on your face to-day when you came in the gift room? You use the word insult. What was the look I saw on your face when you came into the room?"

She murmured: "Explain, you must explain, you *must*!"

He let her hands fall.

"I have nothing to explain."

"You knew I was poor. A poor man has debts—gambling debts perhaps. Then there are women in men's life who make dreadful scandals—there is blackmail. A chap does things in desperation and is not all bad. I have known men to do such things. But from the moment I saw that look on your face to-day, the look which said you thought I was a thief, the world stopped for me." He threw back his head and gave a little laugh. "It will never go on as it was before."

Here she put out her hand as if about to take his, but let it fall.

"I've nothing to explain. The fact that for the tenth of a second you believed me a thief makes everything else of no value. Of course now"—there was a break in his voice—"you don't even believe in my love!" His voice was low, but there was a ring in it that she never forgot. "It doesn't make any difference any more. I've tramped with that horror all day."

"Ever since I was a kid I have had a hard time. I have gone to all lengths in times of stress. I have been in all parts of the globe after adventures, but

this is the saddest adventure of them all. My heart stopped when I saw that look on your face."

He stood straight as an arrow, fine as a lance; his figure once more was immovable against the curtain, and he looked like the picture up in her room, but the smile was gone.

"My things are all in the station. Before your clock strikes again I shall be gone. Think of me as you will, but you can't believe that I did not love you. *That you can't believe!*"

She would have given much to think him innocent. She covered her face with her hands, murmuring:

"*Oh—you better just go—you better just go.*"

He looked round the dark, paneled room where the shadows gathered like ghosts ready, when he should go, to haunt Waybrook; and as she stood with her hands across her eyes, he took her in his arms and kissed her upon her hair, upon the hands covering her eyes, and upon her lips. He opened the window and she heard him say "Good-by! Good-by!" and only stirred when she felt the cold night air rushing in upon her.

She found herself clinging to the curtain, her face buried in its folds. She might have been a night moth blown there as she clung and shook, the heavy curtain wrapping her round. Ramsay had drawn her toward the window as if he wanted to take her with him into a world which had treated him not any too well! She came to herself as the clock struck, realizing that she was part of a household whose conventions would not stand for the lady of the house wandering about at dawn through the lower rooms without excuse!

She passed her hands over her face to wipe away not the kisses of an hour before, but the marks of tears; and drew the curtains to shut out with the

moonlight the figure of the man who had disappeared into the night. Then she left the music room, intending to go upstairs. She remembered what Cynthia Moore had said that morning about the Earl of Moray and the line of the Persian proverb: "Honor and Dishonor are in the hands of the Beloved."

On the first step of the staircase she stopped to look toward the smoking room at the far end of the hall, and she saw a line of light under the doorway. Her first thought was that Ramsay had hidden there, and as she crossed the hall she realized that she wanted him to be there—*she wanted him to be there!*

In one of the entirely comfortable chairs, his hand shading his eyes, an open book on his knee, unconscious of midnight rendezvous, her husband was sitting. He turned round and rose as his wife came in, and she saw, although grave and stern, he was impersonal as far as *she* was concerned.

"Hello, Nell! Couldn't sleep, just as I couldn't, I suppose?"

She wondered if it was possible that he had heard her in the music room at the end of the hall.

She came over to him.

"Two o'clock, Tommy; terribly late!"

Hereford drew over the other big chair.

"Since you are up, Nell, sit out a bit longer with me, will you?"

He would think she had been weeping at losing Patricia, no doubt imagine that she had come directly from Patricia's room. He said:

"The little girl *will* leave an empty place and we are going to be awfully lonely. 'We'll have to go on a new honeymoon trip, Nell!'"

Mrs. Hereford sank down in her chair and tried to smile.

"Have you been mourning here all the evening for Patricia, Tommy?"

"No, only been down about half an hour."

He smoked without looking at her, and again she wondered whether it were possible that he knew she had been in the other room with Ralph.

"I've been in the music room for some time. It was full of memories of our jolly time, of dances, of Patricia's coming-out ball."

But Hereford did not appear to have heard what she said. His face had settled into the harsh gravity and look of displeasure that she always connected with his son.

"What is the matter, Tommy, tell me?"

"The old story—Jack!"

Mrs. Hereford, with a breath of keen relief, put her hand on his knees, and sat back in her chair.

"Poor Tommy! It must be something perfectly terrible for you to look as you look and to sit here like this half the night."

"It is the worst."

"What is it? Tell me."

"Blackmail!"

And clear as ice came to her the remembrance of Ramsay's words: "*There are women in men's life who make dreadful scandals for them. There is blackmail—*"

"It is a relief to speak to you, Nell. When Jack was at Cambridge he got mixed up with the worst kind of woman and made some sort of marriage with her. Drunk, of course. She has trailed him ever since, followed him even to France; been bleeding him to death. The money you and I have given him has gone to her. He's been keeping her quiet until now. He told me this last night, here in this room, and he asked for money to shut her up, as she threatened on Patricia's wedding day to give out a flashy story to the newspapers and drag us all in."

Mrs. Hereford never stirred.

"I fairly kicked him out of the

house," her husband said. He heard her ask:

"But you refused to give him money?"

"Yes, and I told him all the newspapers in the United States could print his story if they liked. It was his own life!"

Mrs. Hereford half rose, murmuring:

"Oh, and he needed money like *that*! Tommy, like *that*, and you didn't give it to him?"

"I told him if he went to you or Patricia I would disinherit him. I told him to get his lawyer. It was up to him. If you begin to give to blackmail you are lost. Let him take what is coming to him—he has made his own life!"

She gave a cry, sank more deeply into her chair, and burst into tears, her head on the arm of the chair. Her husband bent over, reassuring her, telling her not to worry; Jack would get a lawyer and he had been a brute to tell her when she was so utterly done up and tired.

But she had broken down under the strain of fatigue, emotion, and passion greater, at last, than her control.

She tried to pull herself together, to control her grief. She would write Ramsay to-morrow, she would ask his pardon. To her now it was clear as day. Oh, it was clear! But Ralph would never forgive her—never in the world. She heard her husband go over to a little cupboard in the wall where drinks were kept; she heard the snap of the soda-bottle cork like a little shot.

There was nothing she could say to her husband. Her passion for Ramsay had protected his son. Hereford would never know anything of the theft or anything of her false suspicion.

"Honor and dishonor had been in her hands!"

Her husband came back with a refreshing drink for her, and sat down

on the arm of the chair, made her swallow it, and then he drew her up with great gentleness.

"It is nearly morning," he said, "and we have a busy day before us. Brace up, old girl!" He kissed her on her hair.

Mrs. Hereford looked up at him through her tears. First of all, her

husband's honor had been given to her for keeping. How ruthlessly she had torn it and thrown it away!

Hereford put his arm around her. She needed his support, and they went out, side by side, past the music room, where the ghostly shadows gathered in the four corners, only waiting to take possession.

She had just become engaged, and was in that superlatively happy attendant state. But, coming down the stairs she overheard Mary MacLane's remark to her fiancé. And then— Read Marie Van Vorst's next tale, "The Girl Who Was Staying in the House," in the January AINSLEE'S.

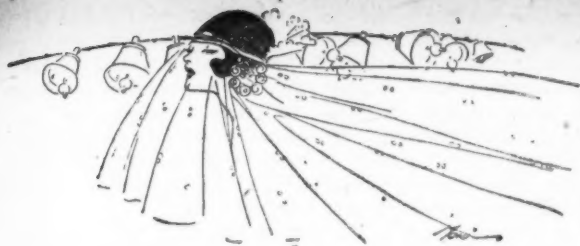
DISSIMILARITY

MY lady is not like the moon.
The moon is neither warm nor near;
She sheds her love, a general boon,
Too indiscriminately dear.

My lady is not like a star,
However brightly beautiful;
For every winking one is far,
And chastely unattainable.

My lady is not like a flower.
A flower is a defenseless thing,
Too frail to daunt with beauty's power,
Too old to see another spring.

Yet flower and star and moon and sun
Are nothing to her beauty's blaze.
My lady's like herself—and none
Can shape, in words, a loftier praise.
CLEMENT WOOD.



Thursday for Crosses

By Gene Markey

IT was a generally accepted fact in fashionable circles in and about Chicago that no wedding party was complete without Monty Sims. Monty was one of those utterly correct persons on whom dowagers depend to ornament their boxes at the opera. Whenever his name appeared in the newspapers, which was often, it was accompanied by a picture of M. F. H. Sims III in polo kit or on the sand at Palm Beach or in the Persian costume he wore at Mrs. So-and-so's fancy-dress ball. He was that sort of fellow. The newspapers seemed to enjoy following his career, though he himself detested publicity in a lazy way—which was quite the way he did everything.

He had been out of Harvard three years, and in that time had officiated as best man at twelve weddings. It was almost a business with him. June was the only month in the year when he had anything in particular to do. Sometimes he had as many as two weddings in a day, and went rushing about in his gray limousine like a harried undertaker in the midst of the influenza season.

For it was at weddings that Monty shone. He was quite indispensable, and none of his friends would have dared consider getting married without having him for best man. That was usually decided even before the date was set.

There was something awfully jolly about having Monty for your best man. In the first place, it always assured the proper social tone, when, perhaps, every one knew that the bride's father

had made his money recently and vulgarly in near-beer or pickles or something. Too, he was always meticulously well informed as to sartorial details; knew absolutely whether one or two-button cutaways were being worn, or whether recent fashionable weddings in England had favored striped black four-in-hand ties or black bows with white polka dots. Monty always knew. Also, with him as your best man there was no worrying about the ring. He had never been known to misplace one at that crucial moment when the beatific bride and the self-conscious bridegroom stand before the altar, making promises they don't in the least intend keeping.

All that has been said merely relates to his professional self—Monty Sims, the super-groomsman. As to Monty Sims, personally, it was generally acknowledged, from Bar Harbor to Santa Barbara, that he was a deucedly good sort. Every one liked him, in the first place, because he was a likable chap, and, in the second place, because he was too lazy to make enemies.

He was not bad looking, and his mother was outrageously wealthy. It might be added that this good lady was in the habit, monthly, of doling out fabulous sums to her son and heir, whom she worshiped.

Just why Monty should have selected Chicago as his place of residence no one quite knew. He was always welcome in London, where one of his aunts was a duchess, and his uncle Charley was a military attaché at Paris. There

were numberless places open to him; his doting mother had a cottage at Bar Harbor, a house on Madison Avenue in New York, and a country place on Long Island. He himself had a camp in the Adirondacks, a yacht in Florida waters, a house and a stable of polo ponies at Coronado. And here he was, hanging around Chicago, for no particular reason save that it was centrally located on the map.

"Ugly place, Chicago," Monty was wont to say. "But it's *nearer* places than any place else. If I want to go in any direction—N'York, California, Palm Beach—ding-a-ling! The little Jap packs the big trunks—ding-dong! Off I go! There you are! Besides, Chicago has the best-looking girls in the world. Fact!"

In his younger days girls had bothered Monty no end. At Harvard, in the accepted slang of 1912, he had been considered "a bear with the women." At twenty-two, in New York, so great was his popularity that they had called him "the *Débutantes'* Delight." At twenty-three his engagement to Lady Violet Tappington—pronounced "Tap-ton"—youngest daughter of the Earl of Rummygo, had caused a stir in the fashionable world. But two weeks together at an English house party had convinced both of them that marriage was out of the question.

At twenty-four he had considered himself practically irresistible. At twenty-six he realized that he was slipping. Women did not seem to fall for him as readily as in his younger days. Bridesmaids no longer expressed the same thrills at finding they were to be in the same wedding parties.

Was it that his hair was thinning, or that he had taken on weight since the polo season at Aiken closed? The thing rather worried him, because his worshipful mother, who was large of figure as well as of heart, and addicted to double chins, asthma, and chow dogs, had

long been counseling him to find a wife.

It was mid-June. He was at the country place on Long Island, having come on to spend a week with his mother before going to Chicago for Artie Bangs' wedding, and she was opening the subject again—at dinner on his first evening home.

"I'd like to see you get married, young man," she wheezed cheerily. "Time you had a wife. Not that they're particularly nice things to have, but everybody has 'em. Besides, I'd like a daughter-in-law to bully. I'm entitled to one. You're twenty-six. Time you were stepping off."

"But I don't believe in marriage," argued Monty.

"Rubbish!" sneezed Mrs. Sims. "That sounds like those long-haired men and short-haired women down in Greenwich Village!"

"I don't mean that way. I s'pose it's all right for some people; but I've lost my faith in marriage."

"You're not supposed to lose your faith in it till after you're married."

"Maybe not; but little Monty has walked the plank—or the aisle—twelve times, with twelve unfortunate bridegrooms."

"Well?"

"Well, not one of the marriages 'took'."

"Took?"

"Lasted. Out of the twelve there have been eight divorces, three separations, and one general bust-up."

The old lady whistled.

"Do you wonder that I haven't any faith in the time-honored sacrament?"

"But what," she puffed, "was the trouble with the twelve? Who was to blame?"

"Fifty-fifty. In some cases the man; in some cases the woman. With the Freddie Farnums it was simultaneously mutual. Anyway, not for mine!"

"But there must be some nice girls in the world, dearie."

The perplexed Monty shook his head.

"The ones I see are either too fat or too thin. They either have too much money or not enough. They either don't know anything or they know too much. And there you are!"

"But you tell me you're going out to that backwoods town, Chicago, for another wedding!"

"I couldn't get out of it, my dear. It's old Artie Bangs. You remember Artie? My class at Harvard. Remember, we met him in Egypt last year? I promised I'd help him out. The wedding's next Thursday."

"A Thursday wedding?" exclaimed Mrs. Sims asthmatically. "Good heavens!"

"What's the matter with that?"

His mother shook her head dolefully.

"My! My! Bad luck. Haven't you ever heard the old saying:

"Thursday for crosses,
Friday for losses,
Saturday no day at all."

It's extremely bad luck to marry on Thursday. I know because it was on Thursday I married your father!"

"But poor father——"

"Poor grandmother! You inherit your distaste for matrimony. I don't blame you. But I do wish you'd find a wife—if only to show people you can. Only last week that silly Mrs. Ricketts had the nerve to tell me you were getting too old to marry. Fancy that! And she's ten years older than me if she's a day!"

Now, there was probably no one in the world more superstitious than Monty Sims. He would rather have expired on the spot than light three cigarettes on the same match; he would never think of starting a journey on Friday, nor walking under a ladder. He would twist his neck into any contortion that he might view the new moon over his right shoulder; and as for

breaking a mirror—well! In short, there were no end of superstitions in which he indulged himself, often to the amusement of his friends.

And as he sat there with his mother he was not listening to the account of Mrs. Ricketts' unkind remark. His mind was dwelling, with no little fascination, on that old saying about marriage—"Thursday for crosses." Artie Bangs was to be married on Thursday. Was it a bad omen?

His mind strayed back over the matrimonial Junes of former years, and with a start he recalled that Jimmy Jamieson had been married on a Thursday. Mrs. Jimmy was now in Reno. The Hopkins, too, had been married on Thursday. So had the Billy Winkles. So had—good heavens! Had all of these unfortunate marriages occurred on Thursdays? It seemed that they had. There must be more than mere superstition to that old adage, after all.

"I've just thought of something," said his mother, setting down her demitasse suddenly. "You've been in twelve wedding parties. The one next week will be your thirteenth! Ho! Ho!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Monty agitatedly. "Do you think—do you think that——"

"You never can tell!" she wheezed merrily, shaking a fat forefinger at him. "You never can tell! It's your thirteenth wedding. You'd better look out—something might happen to you!"

As Monty sized up the wedding party on Monday, his first day at "Fairways," old man Pollard's estate at Sachem Hill, he decided that it was going to be a rather thin affair. Ann Pollard, the girl whom Artie Bangs was to marry, was rather attractive, after a tall, thin, yellow-haired fashion; but Monty couldn't say much for the bridesmaids. The matron of honor was a languid Tennessee lady of twenty-eight or so, with a prodigious appetite for Scotch whisky.

Monty looked her over, assured himself that she would play if invited, but decided it was not worth the trouble. A flapper of eighteen, from Philadelphia, due to arrive that evening, was to complete the party.

"A flapper of eighteen! Ugh! It might be his thirteenth wedding, but, by Jove, there wasn't much chance of anything happening to him—not with this array of femininity!

The ushers were the conventional type that looked well in dinner coats, parted their hair sleekly in the middle, and could be depended on not to be too drunk at the wedding.

So much for the house party at "Fairways." Monty was thoroughly bored before his Jap valet had had time to unpack his things. Ho-hum—there were three days of it yet before the wedding!

Dinner that night at the Greenmoor Club would be a decided ordeal, he told himself, and, in consequence, he repaired to his room at four o'clock, after a dull set of tennis with two duller bridesmaids and the duller usher.

"Goro," he said, sinking wearily upon the bed, "in the top drawer of that wardrobe trunk——"

"Already open," grinned the trim little Jap, producing a fresh bottle of Plymouth gin. On the table stood a tall glass, some limes, a bowl of chopped ice, and other ingredients.

"Well, well," sighed Mr. Sims. "This isn't so bad. I have three hours yet before dinner."

To tell the truth, the dinner at Greenmoor did start out to be an ordeal, but Monty was in a decidedly jovial mood and didn't mind being placed between the stupid Tingle twins half as much as he would have if Goro had not found the bottle of Plymouth gin.

In fact, the Misses Tingle were finding him a delightful dinner companion, and when Monty, forgetting for the mo-

ment that they were Methodists and that he was not at the yacht club, told them that one about the two traveling men, the Misses Tingle giggled furiously.

As Miss Persis Perkins glanced about the table, her carefully prepared eyebrows lifted with ennui. It was bad enough to be eighteen and have to leave Philadelphia for this ugly, mid-Western Chicago, without having all the stupid men of the party placed around you! Miss Perkins, being a very modern young woman, knew, at eighteen, more about men than her mother knew at forty-eight—far more. Therefore, by the time her untouched caviar had been taken away she had assured herself that the blond young man on her left was an utter dumb-bell and that the red-haired one on her right could talk nothing but motor cars. So she had no further time for either of them.

At Princeton, Williams, and Dartmouth house parties she had waged many a successful campaign, and, flapperlike, she was well aware of her own powers. There being nothing to do but look about for an eligible victim, her bright gray eyes appraised the row of dinner-coated males opposite, and came suddenly to rest upon the jovial countenance of M. F. H. Sims III. He had just finished telling the Tingle twins that perfectly outrageous one about the Ford that wouldn't start, and the Misses Tingle were fairly convulsed.

Persis' eyes widened. She laid a hand on the sleeve of the red-haired youth next to her.

"That isn't Monty Sims, is it?" she demanded incredulously.

"Absolutely," grinned the youth.

"The Monty Sims?"

"There could only be one. Why? Know him?"

Now, Persis had never met the gentleman, but she had often heard about him, read about him, and seen his picture in those magazines that are filled with fashions and fashionable people.

Once, even, she had watched him play polo at Meadowbrook.

"Of course I know him," she fibbed promptly; "I've seen him lots—around N'York, you know." And the eyebrows lifted to assure the youth that anything west of New York was quite impossible. "But I didn't know he was going to be in this party."

"He's Artie's best man."

"Really!"

She had decided, in the last forty seconds, that Monty Sims was quite the only person at the table worth talking to, and her eyes rested upon him greedily.

"He's an old bird, though," ventured the youth, jealously noting the glances she was sending over the banked flowers on the table—glances of which the recipient was unaware, occupied as he was with the Tingle twins.

"Old?" echoed Persis, without taking her eyes from Mr. Sims' deeply tanned features. "How old?"

"He's twenty-six," condemned the youth.

"Twenty-six? Pooh! I haven't a friend under twenty-four!"

The youth, who was twenty and a sophomore at Princeton, subsided, and Persis, noting that there was a lull in Monty's conversation with the sisters Tingle, leaned forward on her elbows and opened her campaign.

"I think you might speak to your old friends, Mr. Sims," she said, leveling at him one of the glances that had never failed to wreak havoc.

"Eh?" blinked Monty, suddenly aware that there was some one across the table. "Oh—how d'you do! How d'you do!"

"I didn't know you were going to be on this party," beamed Persis over the flowers.

"Of course, of course," nodded Monty, racking his brain the while to think who the devil she was and where he had met her.

Just then waiters intervened with plates and things, and he had an opportunity to turn to the less simple of the Tingles.

"I say," he whispered, "who's the little flapper across the table?"

"Why, don't you know her?" asked Priscilla Tingle, aghast. "She seemed to know you!"

"Oh, I dare say I've met her," put in Monty hastily. "You meet so many of 'em around, you know. Pretty little thing."

"Ra-ther," sniffed Miss Tingle. "She's from Philadelphia and can't seem to forget it."

"I don't see how anybody could," observed Mr. Sims.

"Her name is Perkins."

"Oh, yes." He nodded, never having heard of any Perkins in Philadelphia. "The Philadelphia Perkins, of course."

But the influence of the Plymouth gin was waning, and M. F. H. Sims III found himself facing an arid interim before he could decently absent himself and seek the flash in his topcoat downstairs. For old man Pollard, like many another fond father, had plenty of the stuff in his cellar, but was not putting it out for his daughter's friends. Ann had offered the excuse that you couldn't serve anything, my dear, at the Greenmoor Club; but Monty knew that the alibi was a lame one. As for Artie Bangs, who had won his Kappa Beta Phi key at college for drinking a quart of whisky at a sitting, that bright young man, having an eye to papa Pollard's millions, was not touching a thing this week.

It looked, reflected Mr. Sims, as if he wouldn't be able to have a drink for half an hour, at least. And now that the effects of the gin were practically dead he was finding the Tingle twins insufferably stupid. But there was the little Perkins girl—he might amuse himself with her. So he did. They di-

rected an animated conversation at each other, to the utter exclusion of the sisters Tingle and the bromidic youths who flanked Persis.

By the time the roast was served Monty was finding Persis a devilish attractive little kid, at that! Before the salad, which he could not eat because he abhorred alligator pears, had been removed, he was convinced, by Jove, that he'd never met a more charming girl! As the heart-shaped ice cream was placed before him he brought himself up sharply. Here, this would never do. She was too attractive for his peace of mind. With a guilty start he recalled his mother's dire prophecy that, this being his thirteenth wedding, something might happen to him!

But it was too late. Persis, who had known what she wanted from the moment she set eyes on him across the table, had gotten in her ruthless work, and Monty was ensnared. She could tell by the way he looked at her through his cigarette smoke.

As they left the table he brutally detached himself from the sisters Tingle and sought her out. She knew that he would; that's why she was heading for the terrace when he overtook her. Other couples were strolling on the shadowy lawn, for it was a "regular dance night" at Greenmoor. Old man Pollard had seen to that—it saved him the price of an orchestra.

As they stood, looking out over the darkness that was the golf course, Persis slipped her arm companionably through his, and Monty's blasé bachelor heart experienced a decided thrill.

"Look!" she exclaimed softly. "There's the new moon."

"Where?"

"There—over the trees."

And in his agitation to view it over his right shoulder he managed to so twist himself that he saw it over his left, and was immediately stricken with a devastating superstitious fear.

"I say," he spluttered, "rotten bad luck—saw it over my left shoulder! Jove—that is bad, you know!"

"Nonsense," laughed Persis. "You don't mean to say you're superstitious?"

"Oh, frightfully," he assured her, promptly forgetting all about the moon as he looked into her eyes.

A moment later the Japanese lanterns around the dancing floor glowed into many-colored lights, and a man appeared carrying a bass drum, followed by three or four other men with saxaphones and banjos and things.

"I s'pose we'll have to dance," sighed Persis, who adored dancing but had the idea that because he was twenty-six he didn't.

"Not if you don't want to."

"I'd love to—with you. Only I hope they don't play one-steps out here. At home nobody dances one-steps."

"If you don't like one-steps," said Monty, with a courtly bow, "I'll see to it that the silly orchestra doesn't play any."

Whereupon the silly orchestra asserted itself with a particularly blatant one-step, and a dozen of those fatuous couples you always find at country clubs set themselves in motion on the dancing floor.

"It is a one-step," said Persis. "But I suppose we ought to dance it."

She knew perfectly well that she wouldn't for the world miss dancing it with Monty. She wanted to show people what she had accomplished.

"Come along, child," said he, taking her hand. "Dance with the old gentleman."

"Don't say that," she reproved, as they strolled, hand in hand, down the terrace to the dancing floor. "You *aren't* old—and you know it! Persis doesn't like to hear you talk that way."

Persis. That was her subtle way of telling him her first name.

Then, as they began to dance:

"I'm a rotten dancer, Persis," he

apologized, knowing very well indeed that he was not. And, whereas the other women had always made haste to assure him that he danced beautifully, Persis merely smiled up at him and said:

"It's just because you're out of practice. You ought to dance more."

After all, there was something different about Persis.

At the conclusion of the first dance they were beset by dozens of dinner-coated young men, each anxious to "have the next," and Monty chose this moment to make a graceful exit. In the locker room of the club he found his topcoat, and, extracting from it the flat, silver flask that made it possible for him to survive dinner dances, promptly sat himself down on a bench for reflection.

Was he, he asked himself, actually falling in love with Persis Perkins? *Something* was happening to him, surely. He had never felt this way about Lady Violet Tappington. He had never felt *quite* this way about any one before—unless, possibly, that diving girl in the street carnival, with whom he had been infatuated at seventeen—

His mother had long been after him to marry and settle down. The "settle down" part did not sound particularly inviting, but no doubt the good lady was right. And Persis was a delectable possibility. Still, hang it, there were those twelve unsuccessful weddings staring him in the face! You couldn't get around facts. How did he know but what the ill luck would follow him? This was his thirteenth wedding—and he had seen the new moon over the wrong shoulder—

But then, what of it! He slapped his knee and screwed the silver cap back into the flask—it was excellent bourbon—and stood up. What did a few silly superstitions matter to him? Persis was a wonderful girl. She was different—really different. She would doubt-

less make an excellent wife. And she *did* dance magnificently—

No doubt the annals of the young god Eros contain records of more speedy romances. Persons less sane than Montague Fairfield Haislip Sims III and Persis Perkins have been known to woo and wed all in an afternoon. But though Monty, cynical veteran of a dozen wedding parties, was not out for a record, he was proceeding up the so-called pathway of love at a somewhat reckless rate of speed. Alternately, throughout the typical country-club evening, he fox-trotted with Persis and visited the locker room.

At ten-fifteen he assured himself that he loved her, and at ten-twenty he assured *her*. Whereupon there ensued, out on the first tee, a rapturous, though not highly original, little interlude.

It was something after six o'clock on Thursday evening. The wedding was over; the reception was waning; and papa Pollard was wondering how much longer the house-party guests were going to stay. The bride and groom, after being half-heartedly showered with rose petals, had departed in a shiny new roadster, a present from papa Pollard, and Persis and Monty were standing, hand in hand, in a secluded corner of the veranda. Persis looked very happy; she was thinking how much nicer *her* wedding was going to be. Monty looked worried.

In the past three days he had done more thinking than he had ever done before in all his twenty-six years of existence. From the moment he awakened on Tuesday morning he had known that he was in for it. Apparently he had proposed—and been accepted. Not that Persis wasn't a dear girl. She was. Probably as desirable as he'd ever find. And a telegram from his mother, in answer to one of his, had assured him that the Perkins family was all that could be desired socially, financially, and

every other way. "Go to it," the old lady had said in closing.

But, somehow, the thought of marriage—now that it actually confronted him—was not as pleasing as it should have been. Suppose he did love her! There were those twelve unfortunate marriages to consider. Certainly each of the twelve gentlemen had, at the time of his marriage, believed himself in love with the lady in question. What was love, anyway? And how was any one to know whether it would last two years or two hours? He knew very well that he himself had never cared for any one more than two weeks in his life! By Jove! it *was* a hard thing to decide—decidedly hard. After all, his bachelor days had been mighty pleasant. It seemed rather a shame to give them up when—

"Monty." She slipped her arm through his in that delightful, intimate little way that was so characteristic of her. "*Monty*."

He shook himself out of his abstraction with a blink.

"Yes, dear?"

"Penny for your thoughts."

"I was just thinking," stammered Monty; "I was just thinking——"

"About me!"

"Yes, dear. Of course."

Jove! What if she *had* suspected what he was thinking! Good thing she wasn't one of these infernal mind readers. What an awful thing it'd be to marry a mind reader! Putting on what he intended for a smile, he patted her hand.

"Hold this, please," said Persis, "while I powder my nose."

He took the ridiculous little platinum-and-gold vanity case and held it, as she had taught him, so that she might see in its tiny mirror.

"Monty," she said naively, as she applied the miniature powder puff to the tip of her cunning little nose, "when are we going to be married?"

Tunk! The vanity case had slipped from his fingers and struck the floor. There was a tinkle of glass, and, looking down in abject horror, he beheld the mirror—broken in a dozen tiny pieces.

"Good Lord!" he gasped, "I've broken the mirror! Seven years' bad——"

"Because," continued Persis sweetly, as if nothing had happened, "I want to plan accordingly. I can either go back to school or go abroad with father. What do you think?"

But the unfortunate Monty was staring ruefully down at the bits of broken mirror. They seemed to glitter up at him evilly.

"What do you think?" repeated Persis.

"Jove!" muttered Monty. "I've broken the——"

"Don't be silly!" she cried, stamping her foot. "There's nothing to those ridiculous superstitions. I want to know what I should do. Go back to school or go abroad?"

With an effort he wrenched his gaze from the fascinating sparkle of the broken mirror, and began to think—rapidly, *desperately*. If she went back to school, the chances were she'd want an early wedding; the confines of a girls' school usually had that effect. If she went abroad, perhaps—perhaps——

"I should say go abroad, by all means, dear," he said almost enthusiastically.

"But I——"

"The trip'll do you good."

"But won't you *miss* me?"

"Of course, dear," he put in hastily; "but I don't want to be selfish." And he put on what he thought was a noble, unselfish expression.

"We'll be gone four months."

"M-m-m-m." He was looking down again at the wreckage of the mirror.

"Will you meet me in New York when I land—in November?"

"M-m-m-m." Those confounded bits of broken glass seemed to absolutely hypnotize him!

"Will you, Monty?"

"Yes, dear. Of course."

"And we'll announce the engagement right away," she beamed, thinking of the newspaper space it would command. "I'll wire dad."

"Just as you say—darling," murmured Monty with a feeble smile.

Ten days later he went on to New York to bid her an expensive *bon voyage*. It was the only decent thing to do, considering the fact that the engagement had received widespread announcement. But his state of mind was even more troubled than before, and as his taxi jolted up Broad Street from the pier the tanned brow under his straw sailor was corrugated with wrinkles, and he was clutching his malacca stick desperately.

In November she would return, and unless she should meet, in Europe, some one she liked better—of course, there was a remote chance of that—it would be up to him to play the happy bridegroom. Monty shivered, though the day was torrid. There recurred to his mind the wretched specter of the twelve unsuccessful marriages. Each of the twelve had occurred on a Thursday. "*Thursday for crosses!*" Artie Bangs and Ann Pollard, too, had been married on that day. Theirs was his thirteenth wedding. They had left for their honeymoon on a Friday. Were these facts ill omens?

What of his own romance? On the night of his meeting Persis, he had seen the new moon over the wrong shoulder; when she had mentioned marriage, he had broken a mirror. Did these signs augur evil? Anachronistically, he shivered and mopped his brow at the same time.

Suppose, though, as Persis had argued, all this superstition was mere rubbish? Suppose there were nothing to it? He might at least give the thing a fair trial. Very well. He would

waive all the superstition, waive the twelve unfortunate marriages, and await the outcome of the Bangs-Pollard nuptials. The newspapers always said nuptials—ugly word! If Artie and Ann, who had been married on Thursday, were still living together amicably when Persis returned, then he, Monty, would take a chance. He would marry Persis. That was fair enough.

As the taxi halted jerkily before the imposing façade of the Sims town house his countenance had resumed a measure of its customary complacency. This seemed a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. It would all depend on the conjugal felicity of the Artie Bangs.

On Friday, the thirteenth of November, Persis landed in New York. Monty had come on from Wyoming, where he had been buying polo ponies, to meet her, and it must be admitted that he was in an excellent frame of mind.

For, when he had passed through Chicago, two weeks before, he had seen the Artie Bangs—yes, dined with them at their lovely apartment on Lake Shore Drive, and the Artie Bangs had appeared absurdly happy. Artie was not touching a drop of anything; Ann was proving a capable and affectionate wife. They seemed unusually happy.

And M. F. H. Sims III rejoiced, for it looked now as if the jinx were broken at last; as if the old hoodoo had been dispelled in thin air. The Artie Bangs were proving Persis' theory that there was nothing to superstition. Certainly, it was safe enough to go ahead and marry Persis.

She was waiting for him in Peacock Alley even at this moment, and as he stepped from his taxi, laden with a huge box of orchids from Thorley's, a hurrying figure collided with him. Each muttered hasty "pardons," and as Monty backed away his eyes opened incredulously. The man who had just bumped into him was Artie Bangs.

"Hey," called Mr. Sims jovially. "Can't you look where you're going?"

Artie Bangs turned and glowered at him. Then he recognized him.

"Why, hel-lo!"

He came back, and as they shook hands Monty observed that his breath was redolent of spirituous liquor and that he did not smile.

"What's wrong?" asked Monty quickly.

"To think that I should meet you," murmured Mr. Bangs dolefully. "You, of all people!"

"What's the matter with me?"

"Last June I gave you a platinum cigarette case—for being in my wedding party."

"Yes?"

"To-day I could cheerfully give you arsenic—for having anything to do with it."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Monty. "What's happened? You haven't——"

Mr. Bangs nodded.

"The whole thing's gone blooey," he said sadly. "Ann left for Reno two days ago."

"But I thought——" began Monty.

"So did I," said Artie. "But I guess I had the wrong dope." Then he grasped his friend's hand and wrung it, and blew alcoholic breath in his friend's face. "Anyway, what th' hell do I care? I'm leaving for Cuba to-night! So long, old boy!" And with an extravagant wave of his hand he was off down the Avenue.

M. F. H. Sims III stood as if spell-bound, the huge box of orchids stowed clumsily under one arm. This was the last straw. Ann and Artie! By Jove! Who'd have thought it? The curse of the Thursday wedding—it would make a good movie title—and yet—hang it!—the old superstition had worked every time. It was uncanny.

Slowly, sadly, he crossed the sidewalk to enter the hotel. Some workmen were getting ready to repair some-

thing or other, and as Monty approached they raised a ladder against the side of the building. Before he was aware, he had walked under it; then, almost immediately, stopped short, horrified. It was Friday, the thirteenth, and he had walked under a ladder!

"You look worried," accused Persis. "Is anything wrong?"

"Of course not—dear," said Monty, with a feeble smile. "What are you going to have to eat?"

The obsequious head waiter, who had known Monty since he was eighteen and wore spats, was standing beside the table to take their order.

"Oh, I'm not very hungry," chattered Persis. "A canapé of some sort, Gustave. Perhaps a breast of guinea hen. No, I don't think I want that. Let me see——"

And while she perused the menu and changed her mind her fiancé sat slumped in his chair, staring vacantly at the tablecloth.

The thirteenth Thursday wedding had gone up in smoke. Since he had known Persis he had seen a new moon over his wrong shoulder, broken a mirror, and walked under a ladder. Now, to crown it all, Persis had come home on Friday, the thirteenth, and was no doubt expecting him to marry her. It was a jolly outlook for him——

At length, when Gustave had departed with their order, Monty managed to rouse himself to the extent of asking her what sort of a trip she'd had.

"I enjoyed it lots," she said, and, being a modern girl, added: "I met loads of attractive men everywhere we went, and—oh, yes—there was an awful Italian count that wanted to marry me."

"They generally do," said Monty gloomily.

Not two minutes after they had been seated Persis began bowing to acquaintances at other tables—sleek-haired youths, particularly, and several of them

had come over to shake hands with her. Before their luncheon arrived Monty had been forced to rise nine times and stand awkwardly while young men he had never seen before bent over his fiancée and conversed long and intimately. And to each Persis had said, with amazing cordiality:

"Call me up—I'll be at the Ritz."

If all these birds did call her up, reflected Monty, who was not in the least jealous, she'd be able to do nothing else for the next few days but answer the phone! Their first tête-à-tête luncheon was rapidly degenerating into a public reception. He was relieved when the last young man had finished paying his respects, and, sinking into his chair, he resumed his own morose trend of thought.

After interminable small talk, in which he had taken part abstractedly and monosyllabically, an idea presented itself to him. There was just one chance. If Persis were willing to be married on any day but Thursday, perhaps—just perhaps—the hoodoo might be averted.

As if divining the nature of his cogitations, the young lady leaned forward on her elbows and smiled at him impudently.

"When," she asked, "are we going to have this perfectly good wedding?"

Her fiancé stirred uneasily in his chair.

"When would you—like to have it, dear?"

"I don't want the usual thing," said she. "I've made up my mind not to have a June wedding and not to do *anything* the way other people always do." Monty brightened. This looked decidedly promising. Persis wanted to be different. Excellent!

"I was thinking," she went on, nodding to a smiling youth across the room, "that it would be nice to have it *really* different, you know. Maybe a January wedding or something like that."

"Fine," nodded M. F. H. Sims III enthusiastically. "Couldn't be better."

Then, with an uncertain, tremorous feeling beneath his waistcoat, he leaned forward.

"Persis," he said, aware that his voice was quavering slightly, "have you—have you decided which *day* you want to be married on? Which day of the week, I mean?"

"Oh," said Persis, smiling across the room at another youth, "I'm glad you mentioned it. The day I prefer—is Thursday. All our family—" She stopped. Monty appeared to be choking.

"Here, take some water," she said, shoving her glass toward him.

But Monty was pushing back from the table. There was a wild look in his eye.

"Will you—excuse me?" he gulped. "Excuse me, *please!*" and, rising hastily, he bolted from the room.

On a sunny afternoon, a fortnight later, as Mr. Artie Bangs was passing the door of Manuel's Bar, in Havana, he was attracted by sounds of an altercation within. A voice Mr. Bangs seemed to have heard before, was raised in violent argument with—apparently—innumerable Cubans. The voice was strangely familiar, and Mr. Bangs, seizing a firm grip on his walking stick, pushed open the door and entered.

An interesting scene greeted his eyes. Behind the bar crouched the swarthy, mustachioed Manuel himself; numerous patrons were distributed beneath the tables, and, in the center of the floor, an inebriated gentleman in a rumpled white suit was with difficulty being escorted out by ten native policemen. It was M. F. H. Sims III, and he was giving the ten native policemen a merry time of it.

"Here! Here!" shouted Mr. Bangs, producing a roll of American currency. "What's the big idea?"

At sight of the American currency the ten native policemen immediately released their holds on the inebriated gentleman's person.

"Ees crazy!" shouted the swarthy Manuel, poking his head up cautiously behind the bar. "T'ree days now ees com' een, stay all day, dreenk feefty

geen feezees, talk alla time 'bout don' gat marry on *T'ursday!* Ees crazy!"

"Crazy—hell!" said Mr. Bangs, assisting his friend to a seat at one of the tables and distributing the American currency among the ten native policemen. "Let him alone. He knows what he's talking about!"



"TIME IS DEAD"

OLD Time is dead! I saw him in his shroud,
Woven of moonbeams, gossamer, and lace;
All the red roses chanted litanies,
And lilies swung their censers to his grace.
His face of fire and ice—I speak you true—
The others, smiling, whisper, "She is mad!"
Can joy be mad? Or sunlight? Answer, you!
I saw Time dead—and therefore I am glad.

He was so cruel, withering every rose,
Holding the Lady Moon in sullen thrall,
Drowning long, golden days with pitch-black night,
Shrouding dead summer in a winter pall.
Now splendid, joyous June may feately sue
Delicate April in her virgin charms,
And gusty March, the man-month, wildly woo
August, the golden, to his lusty arms.

Time dead! No more to raven Love and Youth?
Ah, me! Ah, me! Repinings all are vain—
If he had died before he froze my heart,
I wonder would I reek it loss or gain?
The snow that melts not crowns my weary head—
But—I can smile to hear them—"She is mad."
Upon my broken life, I speak you true—
I saw Time dead—and therefore I am glad.

MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



Double Fortune

By Eleanor O'Malley

Author of "The Red Hat"



GEORGE KILTER and I were the victims of destiny's queerest freak. We were doubles. In college his bill collectors were always cornering me on the campus, and his friends used to hail me, especially, as most frequently happened, when they were drunk.

When I came and settled in New York, Kilter had arrived before me, and it began all over again. Strange people were always greeting me, and time after time men had to apologize for clapping me on the shoulder. On my rare visits to the restaurants, obsequious head waiters addressed me as Mr. Kilter and were constantly astonished at the small size of my check.

At first I began to explain the mistake, but after a time I accepted it as part of my life. It fascinated me, too, to touch constantly upon the world in which this man lived. His spectacular social career lent a shade of romance to my own contented, humdrum existence. His money and family connections gave him many opportunities that were beyond my reach. Wall Street talked of his speculations, fellows at the club commented on his gambling and his spree, sporting papers reported the successes of his race horses. But he lost popularity when he began drinking too heavily. Also, he lost money.

After a time the attraction of this

striking likeness began to be diminished. Men began to mistrust Kilter. There were several ugly rumors about him, and he ran into debt. Conveniently enough, the resemblance between us faded as dissipation clouded his complexion and left puffy spots under his eyes, yet even then it took an intimate friend to tell us apart.

We had never been friends, or even close acquaintances, so the telephone message that awaited me on my arrival home one eventful night came as a complete surprise. At first I thought he was in the usual difficulty of having been mistaken for me, but the urgency of it prevented my following my inclination to ignore it. He said he must see me at once at his rooms on a matter of utmost importance; that he was too ill to come to see me. Regretfully laying aside the book I had brought home to read that evening, I concluded there was nothing to do but go.

I found him in worse condition than I had expected, though a bottle of bourbon and a siphon of soda bore silent witness that the doctor's orders were not being followed. I looked around for the nurse, but he said she had gone, and that his Japanese boy stayed with him during the night.

He was in a bad predicament, he said. His uncle, whose heir he expected to be, insisted on an immediate visit from

him, and his sickness prevented him from paying it. The old man would not believe he was ill, and, as he had put off the visit for years, he stood the risk of being disinherited unless he went immediately to Virginia. At this point he began coughing and gasping in such an evident effort to impress me with his illness that I grew suspicious. I looked around for medicine glasses and other signs of a sick room, and found nothing. In silence, I let him proceed.

He knew that my meager law practice by this time permitted a yearly trip South, and that I was about to leave. His suggestion was that I should pay a short visit on the way down. The old man had not seen him for years, and was quite near-sighted, and our voices were similar. About the other people in the house, he said there would be only a doctor and his uncle's attendant, besides the servants. They would not remember much of him, as his previous visit had been very brief, and the doctor would know the reasons for my coming in Kilter's place. He was to be the only one in the secret.

"You always like adventure, I remember, Joe," he finished. "This will give you plenty. It won't be out of your way, and it will mean a pleasant day or so. There's no need to stay longer than that. There's hunting and fishing and some fine horses. The old man has a good library, too."

He had hit on all my hobbies, and I was moved.

"As I say," he went on, "there isn't any possibility of discovery. I've been down there only one week in ten years, and the old man's so short-sighted he's nearly blind. Then, we talk just the same. Going through the same school and everything, you'll know just about where I've been, and about college and that; we seem to have been following each other up pretty well. The doctor and attendant will understand about it from me, and the servants—there's no

chance of them having a more than vague idea of what I looked like.

In his eagerness he seemed for a time to have completely forgotten about his illness, and I had been watching him closely.

"Why is it, George?" I said. "Can't you tear yourself away from the lady for a week?" He started a vigorous protest to assure me of the reality of his sickness, and then, as if willing to adopt any excuse which seemed plausible: "You've guessed it, Joe. Come on, be a sport and do it! It'll be fun for you and mean no end to me!"

He was too earnest about it. I was sure now there was no girl in his reason for not wishing to go, and I was puzzled. For a minute, I thought of refusing, and then the mystery of it all attracted me. To play the part of another man, for some unknown reason, on a fine old Southern estate—I hesitated a moment, wondering at the strained, anxious look on Kilter's face. Then I accepted.

The next evening, on my way to the station, I had one or two misgivings. I remembered the rumors about Kilter, and the strained, anxious look on his face as he watched me making up my mind, and I had uneasy suspicions. Then the mood of last night came again—the love of adventure for its own sake. I told myself that a man on the point of being disinherited would naturally be anxious, and why he wasn't anxious enough to go himself was the mystery to be solved.

As the train drew into Twin Hills station the following morning, it took all the recollection of my promises to Kilter not to back out. I ran desperately over the information with which he had coached me, in case any one should be there to meet me. A liveried darky stepped forward and touched his hat, with "Mr. Kilter," as I got out, and when I had safely passed him and his

twin, and we were moving away in the carriage, my spirits rose.

The drive to the house was a long one. At last we swung through two stone pillars, and I saw the Kilter mansion, a square three-story structure, the broad veranda supported by a row of Doric columns.

Doctor Grein, the physician, met me at the door, and his attitude surprised me. There was not even a feigned welcome in it. He seemed to regard me as a necessary nuisance, to be disposed of as quickly as possible, though he took care to be gracious enough in front of the servants. I learned from him that my temporarily adopted uncle expected to see me at dinner that evening. The adventure began to pale into a rather stupid waste of a few days.

The butler took my bags upstairs, and I followed him. As he busied himself with the fastenings, I said, for the want of something better to say:

"How is your master, Jackson?"

I expected the usual reply, about his being a little better or worse than usual, and what the man said surprised me.

"He's acting mighty queer, Mr. George. He's been getting worse ever since you were down here before."

I was glad to know I had passed easily for George Kilter with this ducky, whose sight appeared to be normal, but the information was somewhat startling. I wondered whether Kilter knew of this queer acting, and whether he had sent me to visit a maniac.

"It worries Miss Caroline, too, suh. She arrived sort of unexpected."

I was taken aback. Kilter had figured on only the old man and the doctor, and now appeared a Miss Caroline. I dared not ask who she was, yet I ran the risk of betrayal if I did not find out before I met the lady. The doctor was just going out when I had seen him, so even if his manner had suggested that he had suspicions that I was not George Kilter, I could not ask

him in time. The adventure began to look better. I speculated on her second name, and whether she was fifty and difficult to deceive, or young and gullible—and pretty. All that I could gather from the man without appearing too ignorant of her identity was that she had gone to the village for the afternoon, having expected me on a later train.

After the ducky had gone, I decided that the village would be the best place to spend the long afternoon. I hoped Miss Caroline might hail me there, and I should be spared the necessity of meeting her and the old man at the same time. It was highly probable that living near, she, too, had only seen George Kilter for only one week in ten years, and I knew I could get her story if I could meet her. But my search in the village was unsuccessful.

At five, I returned to the house. Doctor Grein's room was directly opposite mine, and as I walked along the carpeted hall, my feet made very little sound. His door was ajar, and I was surprised to hear his voice speaking angrily. All things being permissible under the circumstances, I stopped for a moment.

"A fool!" he was saying. "A plain fool! Sending here strangers who will spoil everything. It was not enough the girl arrives suddenly—to-day arrives this one!"

Some one in the room evidently advised softer tones, and as footsteps approached the door, I slipped quietly into my room.

Dressing for dinner, I had plenty to occupy my mind. I was glad to know Caroline was a girl, but I was puzzled about her sudden appearance and Doctor Grein's evident resentment of her visit and mine. After several hours at the house, too, I had so far failed to see any reason for Kilter's dread of the visit. The uncle, however, was the ordeal to come, and my pulse quickened as I prepared to face him and Miss Caroline.

I descended to the drawing-room at last, to find Doctor Grein talking to the attendant. He seemed to repent his abrupt treatment of me that morning, and tried to appear genial and affable. I would have asked him about Miss Caroline, but he still made no sign that he knew I was not George Kilter, and, after telling me that my uncle would not be down for half an hour, he went out with the younger man.

I walked the length of the room restlessly, and then the night outside looked so cool and inviting, I stepped out on to the veranda. Dinner was late. It was already after dusk, and as I lighted a cigarette and strolled across the lawn, I was surprised how dark it had grown. I left the lawn and walked on through the long grass. I still had half an hour before dinner, and I wanted to be alone and think things out before meeting the old man. Presently, ahead of me rose a somber wall of pine trees. It would not do to walk any farther before turning back, so I sat for a moment on a decayed tree stump to rest.

I thought of George and his unknown motives for sending me down here, I thought of the uncle I was to meet, and then I thought of Miss Caroline, and at that a temptation to leave before the need of meeting her and deceiving her came over me. I was weighing these thoughts when suddenly something whined past my ear, and there was a sharp report.

In a flash I dashed for the pine trees. Some one was running and dodging in the darkness of the grove. I could hear twigs snapping. I kept close to the trees, and another shot came, but it was too dark to fire accurately, so I plunged blindly ahead. Suddenly I felt a numbing blow on my shin; I shot into the air and came down upon a carpet of pine needles. I had stumbled over a fallen branch. I sat up rubbing my shin. Obviously, further pursuit was useless, so presently I found my way

to the edge of the grove, and hurried back across the lawn, thinking strange thoughts.

I had no idea who my assailant might be, but I was sure George Kilter had expected something of the sort when he had arranged for me to come here in his place. In the event of my being shot, he could no doubt count on the doctor's covering things up to my uncle till it was safe for him himself to come down. I thought at once of leaving. There was no adventure in walking around, a target for George Kilter's enemies, and if my leaving offended his uncle and got him disinherited, so much the worse for him.

I hurried through the hall, not even looking into the drawing-room to see if the old man was down, and I would have dashed up the stairs without stopping, had there not been an obstruction. Coming down was a remarkably pretty brunette, and as she caught sight of me, she smiled.

"George!" she said. "I'm ever so glad!"

Her eyes, as they looked into mine were dark and soft. My heart beat faster, for other reasons than my recent adventure, and then it seemed to skip a beat. Her expression changed to one of doubt.

"Why, what have you done to yourself?"

"Done? Nothing. But you've not seen me for—let's see?"

"Two years. But, George!"

"I know. I'm what you might call a reformed character." I fumbled with a cigarette and dropped it.

She smiled again.

"You're a different man!" she said. "Do you know, you look just exactly as I've always hoped you would. I'm more than glad now."

I was reassured. We stood and talked for a little while then.

"How's uncle?" I asked. "I haven't seen him yet."

I was astounded at the expression which crossed her face. It was more than doubt; it was horrified suspicion of me. I must have shown she had surprised me, for instantly she recovered herself.

"You'll see him in another minute, won't you? You'll have to hurry now."

When I got down again, after having brushed the mud from my clothes, I found every one ready to file into the dining room. The sight of Montgomery Kilter came as a shock. I had understood from George he was comparatively young, not quite sixty, so I was not prepared for his emaciated figure, his haggard face, with fixed, lusterless eyes, and his white hair. After the first glimpse of him I lost all fear of detection, but after the first words, when we were seated in the dining room, the sight of him and his silence weighed upon me.

His hands were never still. They moved with unceasing nervous gestures along the edges of his coat, across his face, among the silverware on the table. The servants moved around noiselessly, and as no one spoke a word, knowing evidently that Kilter would not wish it, I found myself counting the hammer-like ticking of the clock. At last, when I felt that if some one did not break the silence I should shout aloud, he said:

"You're here at last."

"Yes, uncle, and I'm glad to have been able to get down here at last."

He raised his eyes and looked at me with contempt.

"Do not annoy me with pretenses," he said.

Dinner went on in silence. I thought it would never end. Looking up from the table once or twice to catch suddenly the expressions of my companions, I found them puzzling. Doctor Grein was examining me with evident annoyance and aversion; Miss Caroline's gaze was fixed on me with a

strange curiosity, and when she shifted her glance from me to her uncle, I was surprised to find how tender her eyes grew.

At last, when Caroline rose, the old man spoke again.

"If Doctor Grein, and you, Mr. Harvey, will excuse us, I have something to say to my nephew. You may come back for me in half an hour."

The attendant followed Caroline out immediately, but Doctor Grein acted strangely. He hesitated a moment, as if reluctant to leave us alone. Then, as Kilter rose tottering and looked at him with his lack-luster eyes, he turned and left us without a word.

I had expected he might become more cordial now that the others had left, but, though he was more intimate, there was nothing but contempt for me still in his manner. He spoke slowly, with long pauses in which he did not expect me to answer.

"I should not have sent for you," he said, "if there were another man left to send for. Caroline is a woman—she does not count. You are the last of the Kilters. I'm nearly gone. I want you to have a son. I want you to get married, so this place will not go, after all these years, when I go. I have made my will in such a way as to provide for this. You will have all, but you must see that this place is kept up, and that the Kilters do not end with such an unworthy specimen as yourself. Before I die, I want to see you married to a woman worthy of our name. Not one of those you associate with at present, you understand, and not a Maggie Clemens, whom you chose for amusement on your last visit here. Unless you do this, all I have goes to Caroline."

He looked around nervously, and his manner grew suddenly less haughty and more that of a pitiful old man.

"And, George," he said, "I've no one else to ask. That doctor who came a little while ago—Grein——"

At that moment Grein came back. I suspected that he had been listening to every word. I looked at my watch and found we had been not ten minutes, and Kilter had asked him to return in half an hour. He took the fragile old man by the arm in a commanding manner.

"It's time to retire now, Mr. Kilter."

"Leave me alone! Leave me alone! Go away, I say!"

"See here, Doctor Grein," I broke in. "If Mr. Kilter wants to stay here a few more minutes, I don't see any need of compelling him." Then I met his eyes. They said to me, "You interloper! Say much more, and I'll show you up!" Aloud, he said:

"I am sure I know my patient better than you, Mr. Kilter. And he knows I have his interests at heart. I shall be glad to have a talk with you about the case to-morrow, but to-night I must insist on no more excitement."

To insist looked on my part like a desire to pry into George Kilter's private affairs, and the doctor seemed determined.

"Good night, then, uncle," I said.

I looked in the drawing-room, after he had gone, but there were no signs of Miss Caroline. I half made up my mind to light a cigar and stroll out on the veranda, but then I changed my mind. If I was going to be shot, I would rather it happened when there was light enough to know who did it. So I sat down to think in an armchair behind one of the portières.

My impulse before dinner, after having discovered the trick Kilter had expected to play on me, was to leave immediately, but now I was uncertain. I could hardly admit to myself that Miss Caroline had made the difference, yet I knew she counted. She seemed worried and helpless—and she was very attractive. Then the mystery of the thing had increased. What had old Kilter been going to tell me? And why did

Caroline look at him so pityingly? And what did the assailant lurking in the woods outside the house have against Kilter—or me?

I hardly knew what made me turn my eyes to the window then, but as I did so, the hair on my neck seemed to rise. I was sitting at the right of the window, and a heavy portière prevented my being seen. A yellow, malignant face was pressed against the pane, and hard, gray eyes searched the room. I had nearly recovered my senses enough to act, when the head seemed to have heard a noise—probably the watchman in the grounds—and, looking around swiftly, it vanished.

I sat for some time, my heart pounding, waiting for its return, but the cigarette I had lighted burned my fingers, and still no one appeared. At last I decided to go to bed, and, walking slowly upstairs with an uneasy desire to look over my shoulder, I entered my room quickly and locked the door.

I was very tired. The journey on the train had worn me out, and the day had been far from restful, but I resolved not to sleep if possible, so, slipping into a lounging robe which Kilter had lent me, I lay down on the bed. The revolver I had unpacked after my adventure before dinner, was safely under my pillow.

After all, it seemed I must have fallen asleep. I awoke not suddenly, but conscious of having been aroused by something. I lay there for some moments without moving, and gradually, in my half-sleepy state, I heard the noise which must have disturbed me.

Montgomery Kilter's room was next to Doctor Grein's, which was opposite mine in the corridor. As I listened, the low moaning I heard seemed to come from there. Cautiously, I got up and moved toward the door. The moaning was breaking off into words now, words of entreaty, and, as I was about to open my door and go out, I was thunder-

struck to hear a voice which seemed to be firmly refusing. The transoms of both rooms were open. There could not be any mistaking her voice. It was Miss Caroline's. I hesitated, and, as I did, there was a scuffle, and suddenly Doctor Grein's voice in angry tones.

I half made up my mind to go out, then something held me back again. Perhaps, as long as Caroline seemed to be sure of herself, it would be as well to let matters proceed for a few minutes, when I might find out the cause. Slowly the moaning died down. I tried to hear what Doctor Grein was saying, but though I could recognize his voice, I could hear no words, and all I could gather was that he was extremely angry. Suddenly a door slammed as he went back to his room. I waited a few minutes, and then I went out, just in time to find Caroline, in a dressing gown, leaving Kilter's room. Her face was very pale, and as she saw me, she started and looked frightend.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing. Nothing at all. Please go back to your room."

I looked at her in bewilderment. What was this girl doing in the middle of the night, refusing some entreaty of a poor, helpless, old man? She swept past me and down the corridor when I would have questioned her further, and I went into my room again. For a moment I doubted her, but the sight of her pink silk robe, her dark hair cloudy around her face, made me hope against hope that I was mistaken.

I slept no more that night, waiting in an armchair by the window for new developments. But when dawn came and nothing had happened, I at last undressed and went to bed.

The next morning I was surprised to find every one acting as if nothing had happened the night before. I almost thought I had dreamed it, when Miss Caroline and Doctor Grein breakfasted with me, reading newspapers and chat-

ting as if everything about the house were perfectly normal. I began to suspect that they were more closely connected than I had at first thought.

I was told that Mr. Kilter generally had his meals sent to his room and came down only on rare occasions. I went in to see him, but Doctor Grein, who met me just inside the door, told me he was sleeping and that it would be best not to disturb him.

The morning dragged, and in the afternoon, I decided I would either do something worth while or leave the Kilter place to its mystery. But the thought of the helpless old man detained me, and it was late afternoon when I at last proposed a ride with Miss Caroline. I had seen the horses in the morning, and I was anxious to try one of them, and to get away for a time from the unwholesome atmosphere of the house. She hesitated a moment at my suggestion, and then asked Jackson what Doctor Grein was doing. When she found that he had gone down to the village for the afternoon, she accepted, and ran up to change to her riding clothes.

"It's a relief to get out," she said as we started off at a slow trot. "But this is the first time I ever found you enthusiastic about riding." I bit my lip. "You generally preferred watching the other fellow fly around a race course."

"I know." There was nothing else I could say.

"You are changed, really." Her eyes seemed to be laughing. "I wish the people in Craddock could see you now. I was down there yesterday shopping, and they all seemed to know you were due to arrive. The station master has a habit of giving out important telegrams or something. I don't know how else they hear the things they do. Of course, your coming created quite a stir. They haven't forgotten the last time you were here."

"How could they?" I said, attempting humor, and at once I saw another answer was required. Her face changed, and she grew thoughtful.

"No," she said bitterly. "How could they?" But she seemed to be speaking less to me than to herself.

I tried to bring up the subject of Montgomery Kilter, and the occurrence of last night, but she skillfully kept the conversation on indifferent topics.

We had left the grounds and were on the highroad, when suddenly ahead of us I saw the figure of a man step behind a tree. A vague foreboding seized me, and I acted on impulse.

"Let's gallop," I said, giving her horse a smart lash on the flank to prevent refusal. I let her get a little ahead and then urged my own horse on as fast as he could go. We tore past the tree, and I waited momentarily for the shot I expected to come, but nothing happened.

"What on earth was the matter?" she said, when we pulled up at last.

"Nothing. I was sick of trotting, that's all."

"Well, please don't do that again! You don't know these horses."

In a little while, she suggested turning back. I was enjoying the ride and I wanted to find out something about the mystery of the house from her before we returned, but she wheeled her horse around and started back, so there was nothing to do but follow. She gave as an excuse that she did not want to be away from her uncle too long, and when I reminded her that the attendant was there to look after him, I was rewarded with the same suspicious glance she had given me the night before. It set me wondering.

I was puzzling over this, and trying to find some way to make her tell me what she knew when suddenly, as we were passing the tree I had noticed, there was a sharp report and a shot

barely missed my head. My horse reared, and I had just time to see Caroline's shy, before he bolted madly down the road. I was after her in a minute, but they had had a start, and the horse was racing madly.

It seemed an age before I found myself gaining, but at last we were abreast, and luckily I grasped the bit at the first try. We got them to a halt at last, and then, Caroline, who till then had kept firm lips, despite her white face, suddenly broke down and cried. I hardly knew what I was doing, as I dismounted, tied the horses, and lifted her off. The next thing I knew, she was in my arms and I was kissing her wet lashes and her lips, saying things I had never heard myself say before in the course of my dignified career.

When the sobbing stopped, she still clung to me. Then:

"Oh, I'm so glad you're you!" she whispered into my shoulder. "It's all too much for me! And George would have been afraid."

I tilted her pretty chin up till she looked at me.

"Then you knew all along?"

"Of course I knew. George is my half brother."

"Well, all I'm glad of is," I said as I kissed her, "that you're not my sister."

"Oh, look!" after a while. "The sun's setting and it must be nearly dinner time."

"Let's get the horses and go, then, dear."

"Promise me this, though," she said, as I started. "Whatever happens up at the house, you won't doubt me."

"I promise."

I wanted still to loiter along the road, but Caroline evidently had some end in view; she rode off as fast as she could.

As soon as we got in, she inquired at once if Doctor Grein had come back yet, and she found out that he had not. Then she hurried in to see her uncle.

I did not hurry, dressing for dinner. I was too happy in the thought of having found the girl I loved to let the mystery of the house weigh on me. We would stop to see that the old Mr. Kilter was well taken care of, and then Caroline and I would go back to New York. My mind was wandering on to all the happy times we should have together, and I was just giving the finishing touches to my evening tie, when suddenly, across the hall, I heard Caroline scream.

I was out of my room and into Doctor Grein's before I knew what I was doing, and then I saw red. The doctor had Caroline by the throat and was trying to force something out of her hand. In one leap I landed on him. A lunge and a dull thud, and he had suddenly let her go and crumpled on the floor. All my concern was for her. I picked her up in my arms.

"Darling! What did he do? What is it?"

"Take care of this," she said, struggling to get her breath back. She pressed an envelope with some letters into my hand.

I stuffed it into my pocket and looked around to find that Grein had vanished.

"Tell me now," I said. "You must tell me! We can't go on like this!"

"I will tell you. You see, it began a little while after George's last visit. Uncle began taking morphine. We all wondered what was the matter with him, and none of us did anything, till at last I called in a doctor and he told me what was happening. I couldn't think how uncle had begun it. I believe now that George started him. My doctor started to cure him, but then he was called away, and he sent us another man. A little while ago Grein arrived. He said the second man had sent him, but when uncle began to get steadily worse, I grew suspicious of him.

"One day I happened to hear a wire from George to Grein—the station agent read it aloud, before he gave it to me. You know how careless they are in Craddock. It was carefully worded, but I was almost certain after that that George was arranging with Grein to give uncle extremely large doses, and so get rid of him soon. I found out the amount of the prescriptions Grein was having filled, and that made me sure. When you came I thought at first you were another accomplice, but then, after last night, I knew you weren't. I had stolen Grein's supply of the drug, and saved just enough to give uncle a small dose so that he wouldn't be deprived of it too suddenly. Harvey, the attendant, helped me. Grein was furious.

"To-day he went to try and get a supply, and, while he was gone, I broke open his desk, and found those letters from George. I knew that with them I could make him leave the house. He came in just as I was getting away, and then he caught me, and then you came. That's all."

"Caroline! Come here, my dear."

The door leading from Doctor Grein's room into Kilter's had been opened, and in our excitement we had not turned to see Kilter standing in the doorway. There were tears in his eyes, and as Caroline went up to him slowly, he took her in his arms and kissed the top of her head.

Just then Jackson came in the other door, looking for me.

"A telephone call for you, sir."

I went downstairs to answer it, preferring to get away from Caroline and her uncle.

It was George Kilter, of all people, talking from the station.

"I was going to wire you from New York that I was coming," he said. "You know who this is?"

"Yes."

"I got a wire from Grein that Caro-

line was there, and I've decided that I ought to be there myself, after all. I can fix it with Caroline, if you'll just arrange to get ready to leave when I get there. I'm awfully obliged to you for doing this much, Joe! Nothing's happened to you, I suppose?"

"Nothing that you expected," I said savagely. Let him come, I thought.

I did not want to go upstairs again, and dinner was not served yet, so I went out of a side entrance on to the lawn, intending to stroll around the house while Caroline and her uncle were talking. Something made me stop before reaching the front veranda, and I peered cautiously around the corner. A man with a gun was creeping up to one of the windows. My assailant in search of me! A second time that evening. I was glad of my college football training. With a sudden spring I was on top of him, and I had him pinned, with the gun away from him, before he knew what had struck him.

"You! You!" he said, as he saw my face, and he redoubled his efforts to get away, but I had him firmly.

"What are you trying to kill me for?" I said.

"You know!" he gasped. "I swore I'd kill you if you ever came back here again, and you know it. You wouldn't forget Maggie Clemens' brother in a hurry, though you maybe've forgotten Maggie—along with all the other women! You've got me now, but you deserted my sister here, and you can't get away from me for long!"

"See here," I said. "You think I'm George Kilter, and I'm not."

An incredulous laugh followed this statement. "Never mind whether you believe me, I'm not," I continued. "I'll let you give Kilter what he deserves if you'll be a man and fight with your

fists, but no more of this crawling around and shooting a man in the back. Have some sense! You might have shot me by mistake, and been sent to the chair for it. It won't do your sister any good now to get yourself in trouble." The man's face grew more credulous. We now saw the lights of a car in the distance. "That's probably Kilter now," I said. "I've got your gun, but I want your word, or I'll call the police."

"All right," he said. "But I'll certainly smash him up!"

I went into the house as the car entered the drive.

Caroline and her uncle were in the drawing-room, and when I came in, the old man held out his hand to me.

"Son," he said, "I didn't know I was speaking to you last night, but I meant what I said just the same. They won't have the Kilter name, but it'll be the family just the same, and they'll be men!"

Caroline looked at me shyly, and her face was pink.

Kilter staggered into the hall before long. His face was bloody and bruised, and his clothes muddy. At the sight of him, old Kilter tottered to his feet, his hands shaking.

"George," said Caroline quickly, "uncle's found out about Grein. You'd better go!"

Kilter gave one vindictive glance at her, at his uncle, and at me, and went out without a word.

Kilter sat down again, shaking.

"Tell Harvey to come and get me, Caroline," he said. "I'm going to have dinner in my room."

As we watched them slowly mount the stairs, Caroline's hand slipped into mine.





Thought Waves

By Walter Claypoole

AS Freddie Dunning surrendered his week-end suit case to Daida Rollington's irreproachable English butler, he cocked an anxious ear in the direction of the billiard room, from which proceeded a perfect bedlam of noise.

"Well, Griggs," he said affably, "how's every little thing? Glad to see you again, Griggs."

"Very glad to see you, sir," replied Griggs politely, inclining his head and leading the way to the stairs.

The butler, as a mark of signal favor toward a popular guest, carried the bag himself, and, after depositing it on a bench with much care, proceeded to lay out the contents. Freddie remained in the doorway, listening with a puzzled air to the racket, which was getting worse.

"What is that infernal noise, Griggs?" he inquired. "Are they holding an auctioneer's convention, or are they merely murdering somebody?"

A slight shade of embarrassment flitted over the impassive features of the estimable Griggs.

"Well, sir, to tell the truth, I 'ardly know, but I fancy it must be Mr. 'Awkins, sir."

"Mr. Hawkins! I don't think I've met him, have I?"

"No, sir; I don't believe you 'ave sir. Shall I let Mrs. Rollington know you've arrived, sir?"

"No, I'll get some of the dust off first, Griggs, and then I'll find Mrs. Rollington myself. By the way—who is here?"

"Well, sir, there's Miss Dawlish, and Mr. and Mrs. Lorimer, and Miss Somerton, and—er—Mr. 'Awkins, sir."

"Yes, you mentioned him before. He seems to have made an impression on you. What is he like?"

"Oh, 'e's a queer one, 'e is, sir. Not quite what you might call in our class, sir, but 'e's a regular one-er, just the same. Is there anything you fancy, sir? May I send you up a little refreshment, sir?"

Half an hour later Freddie found his dainty little hostess looking distinctly peevish. Being wise in his generation, he told her that she looked like a rose with the morning dew on it, and was rewarded with a flashing smile.

"You're a liar, Freddie, but you're a clever one and a nice one. You may kiss me," said Daida, putting up her face like a spoiled child. Freddie glanced around.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid somebody will see you, Freddie, you old stick. Ten years ago you wouldn't have waited for me to ask you. You're getting ancient. I shall make you wait for it now."

"That's where you miss your bet, Daida," said Freddie. "I was only making sure that Mr. Hawkins wasn't snooping round. I begin to dislike that man already. Who is he, anyway? Griggs seemed quite taken with him."

"If Griggs knew that he was a burglar, Freddie," said Daida, "he would curse me and die. Griggs is a sensitive soul."

Freddie stared. "What do you mean—a burglar, Daida?"

"Just that, Freddie, dearest. A burglar—one who burgles. I burgle, thou burglest, he, she, or it burgles. It's quite simple. Of course as he is staying here in a private capacity so to speak,

he is in honor bound not to walk off with the silver."

"Do be sensible, Daida, for one minute."

"Honest, Freddie, he is a burglar, a real, dyed-in-the-wool burglar."

"Well, you've got me guessing," said Freddie helplessly. "Had your tame burglar anything to do with that diabolical shindy that was raising the roof when I arrived? Griggs seemed to think that Mr. Hawkins was engineering it."

"Yes, he was teaching us how to pick pockets. He used to be a celebrated dip when he was younger. I forgot to tell you, Freddie, that nobody here knows he really is a burglar except Greta Somerton, and now you. Greta knows because she helped me capture him."

Freddie groaned. "All right, Daida, I'll be the goat. Now tell me the answer in words of one syllable."

"There isn't any mystery, Freddie, but for the benefit of your inquiring mind my distinguished guest is 'Silent Sam,' and I first made his acquaintance crawling across my bedroom floor one night last summer. He was after my diamonds, but didn't get 'em. I caught him and tamed him. And now here he is, eating out of my hand. He's no end of fun. You'll take quite a fancy to him."

"I doubt it," said Freddie dryly. "By the way, I hear Theda Dawlish is here. Why don't you sick the burglar on to her? I imagine they'd make a fine team. She specializes in hearts, while he merely concentrates on diamonds."

"I suppose you think that's clever, Freddie. Pardon me if I don't scream with joy, but the fact is I'm in a devil of a temper."

Freddie looked keenly at her.

"I rather felt you had something on your mind, Daida. What is it, am I allowed to know?"

For a few moments Daida stood

silently picking the petals from a rose while a thoughtful frown puckered her vivid little face.

"It's Theda Dawlish again of course, and it's my fault for asking her down here. I don't know why I do it except that I take an insane joy in seeing her make a fool of herself."

"You said last time——"

"Now, Freddie, I just can't stand it if you begin preaching. I've told myself all the things you've got in your mind. This time it's serious and something's going to smash."

Freddie led Daida to a seat and lighted a cigar.

"Begin at the beginning, Daida. Who is the victim this time?"

"I suppose you mean who is the man? The 'victim' is liable to be little Vivian Lorimer, unless we can pry Theda loose in time."

"Suffering Susan! You don't mean to tell me that Jim Lorimer has fallen for her."

"Just going down for the third time. It's a hell of a mess, Freddie. You know Jim and Vivian have been married over a year, and she hasn't come out of her trance yet. It's amazing—and pathetic how that poor kid worships him. I'm afraid she's due for a bad jolt when she does wake up."

"But what is Theda's game, Daida? I suppose she felt bored, and Jim was the only man in sight. Lucky I wasn't around."

"Don't flatter yourself—you haven't enough loose cash."

"You mean to say she is gunning for money?"

"Correct, my child. I'll confess I never dreamed it till lately. I used to think that she was desperately trying to catch a real live man for keeps. She works harder than any other girl I know. And never seems to get anywhere. At the end of the season she is just where she was at the beginning—sitting on the cold, hard bench among

the other extra ladies. Honestly, I used to be sorry for her, but not now."

Freddie uttered a few wordless sounds and pulled at his mustache.

"Well, what's this particular helluva mess that you're worrying about now?"

"That's what I'm coming to, Freddie, if you'll have patience. Wednesday was Theda's birthday. She says she's twenty-three, but she's got the figures reversed. However, if she can get away with it I should fret. Of course we had a party, and, believe me, we made a slight noise. By the way, your old friend Millicent was here, and the way she can come downstairs on a tray is the funniest yet. Well, what I'm coming to is this. Some of us put our heads together and planned to give her a fool gift. Of course she had stacks of real gifts as well—everybody is always very nice to Theda, I'll say that. But this fool gift was an extra, something to raise an extra laugh, you understand. It fell to me to plant the thing in her room. Freddie, somebody had been there before me."

"Good Lord, Daida, how creepy! Did you discover her body, cold and beautiful in death, with the sign of the black hand on her classic brow—or had somebody merely made an apple-pie bed?"

"Don't be a silly idiot, Freddie, or I won't tell you a thing."

"Go on, Daida; I'll be good."

"You had better. Well, I found a pearl."

"A pearl!"

"Don't echo everything I say. I found a big, fat pearl in the toe of her slipper."

"I'm terribly excited. Do you suppose an oyster had wandered into her room by mistake?"

Daida flashed a look of scorn at him and walked away.

Freddie followed contritely and caught up by the rose arbor.

"Honest, Daida, I'll quit fooling.

But really it does sound a bit like a detective story so far, doesn't it? Who do you suppose planted it?"

"Freddie, really this is no joking matter. Jim Lorimer gave it to her."

"The devil he did! How do you know?"

"By putting two and two together. That pearl, Freddie, was one Vivian had set her mind on. She hardly talks of anything else. Crazy about it."

"I suppose Jim says he can't afford to get it for her."

"That's the dope—yet I happen to know he made fifty thousand dollars on the market last month."

Freddie rubbed his chin perplexedly.

"Still, I don't see why you're so sure that because you found a pearl in Theda's slipper, that it is *the* pearl, or that Jim put it there."

"Perhaps you don't, Freddie, but I do. That's one advantage of being a woman. I tell you she's got him hypnotized. Freddie, thoroughly dazed. He would do anything she wanted. And I happen to know she's foolish about pearls herself."

"Well, what are we going to do about it?"

"That's the question, what *are* we going to do about it? I don't propose to let the thing slide. Now, then, Freddie, exercise your well-known and justly celebrated ingenuity."

Freddie scratched his chin thoughtfully.

"Well—er—how does the thing stand? Theda has the pearl—Vivian wants it. Morally it belongs to her. Very well."

He paused, and took a few contemplative puffs.

"Of course, Daida, when you actually had the thing in your hands, you missed a grand and glorious opportunity."

Daida groaned. "Don't I know it, Freddie. And I can't imagine why I was such an absent-minded fish. But

it's too late now. She doesn't keep it permanently in the toe of her slipper, you know. I can't go searching through all her junk. I'd get caught, and then there'd be another howling mess. Now, Freddie, you have brains, think of something sensible and possible."

Freddie tossed his cigar away and stared thoughtfully into the distance. Once or twice he cleared his throat and seemed about to speak, but apparently thought better of it. Daida watched him anxiously and in silence.

"It is a bit of a problem," said Freddie presently. "I'll think about it some more after dinner."

Daida stamped her foot in disgust.

"My holy aunt!" she said savagely. "Really, Freddie, you're slower than a Chinese funeral. I'm disappointed in you, Freddie, and that's the truth. Come in and I'll make you talk to Mr. Hawkins, just out of spite."

Freddie followed with alacrity. "Why, Daida, that's just what I was going to suggest," he said. "I think I'd like to cultivate your new affinity. A man with ideas, isn't he?"

A dimple that was one of Daida's delights appeared for an instant. "Full of 'em," she said, "and able to execute them."

After dinner that evening, Mr. Hawkins, at peace with all mankind, was in a philosophic mood. A couple of cocktails, a pint of excellent champagne, and a liqueur were now but pleasant memories in a rosy haze, flecked with golden, dancing motes. He stretched out a lazy hand and knocked the ash from the end of his cigarette.

"Yes," he was saying, "I quite agree with you, Lorimer, old sport. What we gotta do is pluck out the canker. Speakin' for myself, I never had any use for a bolshevik till he was dead—quite dead."

"You don't agree then that wealth is unequally divided, Mr. Hawkins?" inquired Freddie with a bland air.

"Oh, I don't say that!" replied Mr. Hawkins hastily. "But what I *do* say is—what's the use of dividin' it up equal? It wouldn't stay equal, would it? No; very well, then. I believe in a feller goin' out and gettin' what he wants, either for himself or a pal, not standin' on top of a soap box lettin' off—a lotta hot air about how down-trodden he is."

Jim Lorimer regarded the speaker with a speculative eye.

"I knew a young fellow who did that—bookkeeper in my company. When he comes out I imagine he will go in for truck driving or truck gardening or something where he never need look a trial balance in the face."

"Don't be silly, Jim, dear," put in his wife, a willowy, intense brunette. "Mr. Hawkins means that if we want a thing hard enough we'll get it; don't you, Mr. Hawkins?"

"Sure," replied that philosopher airily.

"I'm so thrilled to think I have a champion at last," continued Vivian. "Mr. Hawkins, that was darling of you."

Mr. Hawkins waved his cigar in a deprecatory manner.

Vivian continued, the fires of faith shining in her wonderful eyes:

"I wouldn't have mentioned it, Jimmy, dearest, only what Mr. Hawkins said has put more courage into me. Jimmy, I'm working on that pearl."

Jim Lorimer started, and dusted the ash from his trousers.

"You're doing *what*, Vivian?" he asked in a slightly husky voice.

"Working on the pearl, Jimmy. Thought waves, you know. I'll get it yet, Jimmy; see if I don't. It may cost more than you can afford, and it's a shame the horrid market's been going against you, poor boy, but thought is a higher power than money, Jimmy."

Money is sordid and material, while thought is—is——”

“I hate to put a damper on your faith, Vivian,” interrupted Jim, “but I’ve yet to meet the dealer who would give a nickel a dozen for thought waves, let alone cut the price of a specimen pearl in two.”

At that moment Theda Dawlish joined the group. She was a dark, Spanish-looking, luxurious creature, with a low, rich voice, a creamy skin, and startlingly red lips. She had expressive ankles, and could say things with her eyes. Altogether a dangerous girl for husbands to know. Most women hated her, but couldn’t afford to let her see it. Her parents had presumably vacated this vale of tears, as nobody ever heard of them. The general opinion seemed to be that Theda was a mighty clever girl, who never left any finger prints behind her. She told people that her income came from oil stocks, which of course is always possible.

Theda sank languidly on to a chaise longue and reached out a slender hand for a cigarette.

“Still excited about the pearl, Vivian, darling?” she drawled. “I think you’re the cutest thing—really I do. You must teach me that thought-wave stuff. I think it’s awfully tony and crisp. Don’t you think it’s toney and crisp, Freddie? Oh, bother, there goes my slipper. I just can’t keep my stupid slippers on. No, Jimmy, you put it on the last time and it’s a shame to bother you. Freddie will put it on, won’t you, Freddie? Stick my slipper on, there’s a good li’l’ Freddie.”

She thrust out a dainty foot clad in the sheerest hosiery, and Freddie, miserably conscious of Daída’s sarcastic eye and scornful smile, did the lady’s bidding. He rose to his feet and tried to pretend that the pink glow behind his ears was the natural result of legitimate exertion.

“Thank you, Freddie, that was sweet of you. I was wondering whether you would take me for a teeny, tiny stroll on the terrace. I wouldn’t be surprised if there were an eclipse of the moon to-night. It’s just perfect for it.”

Freddie cleared away a slight huskiness. “I doubt if they’ve arranged an eclipse for to-night, Theda,” he said, avoiding Daída’s eye, “but I’ll be tickled to come all the same.”

Mr. Hawkins extracted himself carefully from the depths of his club chair and announced that it was time he hit the hay.

“All very well for you young folks—romance and all that sort of thing. The moon always gives me the shivers. Don’t break up the party on my account. I’ll be asleep in about two ticks.”

“Let’s go and see if the goldfish are asleep,” said Theda softly as they moved out of the shaft of light that streamed from the open doors. She slipped her hand beneath his arm, and leaned heavily against him.

“Why don’t you like me, Freddie?” she whispered presently.

“Why—I do like you, Theda. Don’t be silly.”

“No, you don’t, Freddie, not really. You think I’m a flirt and you don’t like flirts. You’re so good and proper, Freddie, that you scare me dreffully.”

Freddie gave her hand a little, reassuring squeeze. He hated the idea that she was afraid. The girl sighed.

“Freddie!”

“Yes, Theda.”

“I’m awfully unhappy, Freddie.”

“You unhappy, Theda? Why, what’s the matter? You always seem as cheery as a cricket.”

“That’s all put on, Freddie—to hide an aching heart. Really, I mean it. I’m miserable, and scared to death.”

They were walking slowly along by the rhododendron shrubbery. Theda stopped and faced him. She placed her

hands on his shoulders and gazed into his eyes with the appealing look of a stricken fawn. Her face was Madonna-like in the soft moonlight. Her slightly parted lips trembled as if with shy words which struggled for utterance—altogether a wonderfully effective picture.

"Listen, Freddie," she whispered. "I wouldn't breathe what I am going to tell you to another soul, not even to Daida, but I know I can trust you to understand. *I'm going to be sold out.*"

Freddie blinked and tried to adjust his mind to this sudden and surprising statement.

"Sold out, Theda? You mean you've been playing the market and——"

Theda caught her breath pathetically and nodded.

"Yes. I put every penny I possessed into Black Gulf oil, and you know what happened to-day."

Freddie didn't know, because he wouldn't have touched Black Gulf with sterilized gloves on. However, he guessed the answer, and pressed her hand sympathetically.

"Sure, it went down."

"Down—down—down. And now I'm down and out."

"Oh, you may be down, Theda," said Freddie, quoting from something he had seen recently, "but you're never out."

She drew away a pace and spoke in a tone of flat hopelessness:

"Yes, Freddie, I'm out. I think I shall take a little dose to-night and end it all."

"Theda!" said Freddie sharply. "Don't be foolish."

He searched his mind for something to say—something adequate to an occasion which he felt was assuming a tragic aspect. Wasn't there something he could do to alleviate her distressing condition? He dimly perceived that there was only one thing which would meet the immediate and practical needs

of a delicate situation. He cleared his throat nervously.

"I wonder, Theda, if you would let me—I mean, it occurred to me that I might be able to—as it were, make it possible for you to—er——"

"Oh, Freddie, you darling!" cooed Theda, putting both arms round his neck and laying her face against his. "I believe I know what you are going to say. You're going to offer to carry me over. Isn't that it, Freddie, dear? It's only five hundred dollars I want, Freddie, and it's as safe as—why, it's as safe as putting the money in the bank. Oh, Freddie, can you let me have a check to-night so that I can mail it first thing in the morning?"

"Sure thing, Theda," said Freddie feebly, a little dazed by the rapidity with which the operation had been performed on his bank balance.

Later, when Daida cornered him just as he was trying to escape to his room, there was an ominous glitter in her eyes.

"Well, Mr. Frederick P. Dunning," she said coldly, "have you anything to say for yourself?"

"Anything to say?" echoed poor Freddie, feebly pulling at his mustache. "What about, Daida?"

"Good heavens! Don't work the innocent act on me. What did that girl want you by yourself for?"

"Why—er—there's nothing unusual in taking a stroll on the terrace, is there? Why are you so suspicious. Daida?"

"It may be catty, but I'm suspicious of that girl. She wanted you for a purpose. What was it?"

"Really, Daida," protested Freddie, "I think you're a bit unjust. After all, she's lonely and sort of defenseless, and—up against it."

"Stuff and nonsense! I suppose you got into this pathetic state of mind after she worked her melting eyes on you."

"Daida, you put things so crudely."

"I feel crude just now. Are you going to confess?"

"What do you mean, Daida? I haven't anything to confess."

"Freddie, I know you better than you know yourself, so you might as well own up. What did she sting you for?"

An unbecoming pink crept into Freddie's cheeks.

"If I made her a small loan, Daida, it was only because I was sorry for her. A girl has no business playing the market. She's had rotten bad luck lately."

Daida looked at him and shook her head pityingly.

"Sometimes I think you're just about twelve years old, Freddie. Was it Black Gulf oil she was moaning about?"

"Er—yes. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing. Only I happen to know she sold out at the top of the market last week."

There was a short silence, and Freddie, fingering his chin nervously, wondered how he could decently break away.

"And you were the one whose massive brain was going to solve the pearl problem. Lord help us!"

Freddie smiled mysteriously. "Well, Daida, it's not too late now. There's always to-morrow, you know."

Daida turned on her heel contemptuously.

"To-morrow she goes, and she takes the pearl with her. Freddie, I'm disappointed in you," she flung back over her shoulder.

This life holds few keener pleasures than the gratification of long-looked-for desires. Can you imagine, for instance, the ecstatic gurglings with which Vivian Lorimer announced next morning the triumph of thought waves? She said she always *knew* if she concentrated hard enough she would get that pearl. And wasn't Jim the dear-

est boy—but how mysterious and secret he had been about it? Fancy talking as he did only yesterday about not being able to afford it, when all the time he had it, and was only waiting to think up a perfectly darling way to surprise her with it. And *nobody* could guess where he put it, so she might as well tell. Jim, the sly darling, had put it in her stocking. Wasn't that perfectly thrilling? And it had nearly scared her to death when she put her stocking on; she was sure it was some sort of horrible bug. And Jim had pretended he didn't know what she meant when she told him how perfectly darling it was of him to give it to her after all. She began digging into the recesses of a gold meshbag.

"Now, then, everybody be prepared to be dazzled," she cooed, holding an opalescent trifle aloft. She waited for a chorus of excited exclamations, which somehow seemed to hang fire. Mr. Hawkins continued to punish the ham and eggs, and glanced at it with no more emotion than if it had been a lump of sugar. Freddie, whose hand at that moment was being squeezed under the table by Daida, said it was a humdinger and no mistake—fancy getting it in her stocking, just like Christmas and everything. Daida told Vivian that she was the *luckiest* girl, and that Jim had put the true flavor of romance in it.

As for the unfortunate Jim, the object of these encomiums, he sat glowering at an untouched plate and drinking far more coffee than was good for him. Since nine that morning, when Vivian had wakened him with a scream of delight, and he had opened a bewildered eye to see her prancing around the room with one stocking on and the other waved wildly above her head, he had been getting scared and madder by the minute. How this thing was going to end up he had no idea, but he felt instinctively that he was being

billed for a star part in an unpleasant bit of realistic drama.

"Just look at Jimsums!" cried Vivian, going over to him and rumpling his hair. "He sits there just as quiet and modest as a li'l mouse. Isn't he the great big Santa Claus then?"

"For Heaven's sake, Vivian," said the miserable Santa Claus, "don't you know how I hate to have my hair mussed up?"

"Oh, all right, big bear. I'll run up and show it to Theda. That lazy thing never gets down till eleven, and I positively can't wait."

Jim, who had just taken another gulp of coffee, choked painfully and held out a restraining hand.

"Listen, Vivian," he gasped as soon as he could breath enough to do so. "I was only kidding. Stay and talk to me, won't you? Fact is, I'm not feeling quite the thing this morning and—"

At that moment Theda, a vision magnificent, swept into the room. A wonderful negligee in silk and lace covered her like foam. Her dark hair rippled over her shoulders and framed a face, pale with suppressed rage.

"Well, she said, shooting a glance around, "I expected to see you all in hysterics, and the place filled with detectives."

"For goodness' sake, Theda," said Daida mildly, "why should I invite detectives for breakfast?"

"It's very evident," snapped Theda, pacing nervously about the room, "that you don't know burglars have been in the house."

"Burglars, Theda! How exciting, and how do you know? But sit down first, dear, and have some breakfast. You look all upset."

"You'll find the ham and eggs awful good," put in Mr. Hawkins enthusiastically. Theda directed a scornful look at him.

"Thanks, I'm not hungry. You all

look so cheerful," she continued bitterly, "that it's very certain I'm the only victim."

"What did the burglar get away with, Theda?" inquired Daida solicitously, noting out of the corner of her eye Jim's unostentatious departure from the room.

"I'd prefer not to say—just yet," said Theda, moistening her lips. She also had noticed Jim's exit.

"Was it—er—big," inquired Mr. Hawkins, describing with his fork an object about two feet in diameter, "or small? It might give us a clew if we knew *something* about it. I always think it's better to have something to go on in a case like this."

Theda took no notice of these suggestions, and moved toward the door. She wondered where Jim had gone—and why.

"Oh, isn't it too perfectly exciting for anything!" put in Vivian tensely. "What an awfully thrilling night! First, Jim with his adorable Santa Claus stunt, and then, this real live burglar. Where is Jim, by the way?"

She looked round for the errant one, who, as a matter of fact, was at that moment closeted in the phone booth getting his partner on long distance. It seemed to him highly desirable that he should get an immediate and urgent call to New York.

Theda's eyes had narrowed at Vivian's last words.

"What do you mean—Santa Claus stunt?" she demanded.

"Oh, I forgot I hadn't told you. Jim played Santa Claus and gave me that lovely pearl. Put it in my stocking! Oh, are you going, Theda? Don't you want to see it?"

Vivian looked after the retreating Theda in a puzzled way.

"Send Jim in if you can find him," she called out.

"I'll find him," muttered Theda under her breath.

The joy of her new possession once more enveloped Vivian. She turned to Mr. Hawkins with shining eyes.

"Don't you remember I said how thrilled I was that you believed in the power of thought waves?" she breathed.

Mr. Hawkins, who had his mouth rather too full of grilled ham for an extended speech, waved his knife reassuringly.

"Sure," he said, "there's nothing like 'em."



HERITAGE

YOU, with your burning hair of gold,
 Your burnished, flaming hair of gold,
 Is there a wealth of fire untold
 That springs to your veins from your heart's stronghold
 And gleams in your burning hair of gold,
 Your burnished, flaming hair of gold?

You, with your starlike eyes of blue,
 Your wondrous, lustrous eyes of blue,
 Is there a depth of soul so true
 That trembles as fresh as the morning dew
 And shines through your starlike eyes of blue,
 Your wondrous, lustrous eyes of blue?

Or did some maid in the long ago
 Have a heart of fire and a soul of snow—
 And did they dream when her life was through
 And wake—in the hair and eyes of you?

AGNES SCOTT YOST.



More Super-Women

By Anice Terhune

Peggy O'Neill:

"The Pompadour of America"

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword—
But where are the snows of yesteryear?
—*Ballad of Dead Ladies.*

NOT many years ago, a little old lady nearly ninety, but still beautiful, sat holding a diminutive court in the drawing-room of her Washington home. Around her, as ever, was gathered a coterie of ardent admirers. The talk turned toward the lady's lurid past.

"What do you really think of Andrew Jackson, as a man?" some one asked.

"As a man!" cried the trembling, old voice, while strange sparks of light brightened the dimming eyes of the super-woman for a brief moment. "He wasn't a man—he was a *god*!"

She was Peggy O'Neill, the woman who had made an entire United States cabinet resign, who had involved numberless great men in her affairs, who had played with people's destinies as other women of her time played croquet.

Like most super-women, Peggy began life at the very bottom rung of the social ladder. Her father was a tavern keeper. And he relied upon his dainty and fascinating daughter to make bright his house. From all accounts, the fair Peggy was most willing to oblige her father in this. An arrant

little flirt, she was blessed with a quick and saucy tongue as well, and she delighted to keep her gallants on the anxious bench.

By the time she was fifteen, men were ready to fight duels over her. Such an affair, between two army officers, she stopped by accepting the proposal of Captain Root, one of the would-be duelists. When the lovers appealed to Peggy's father for his consent to their marriage, the old tavern keeper sternly forbade the banns. Nothing daunted, the lovers planned to elope at midnight. All might have gone well had not Peggy upset a heavy flower pot when she tried to leap out of her window into Captain Root's arms. The ungodly racket awakened the tavern keeper. And there was a terrible scene. O'Neill sent Root about his business and bundled Peggy off to New York.

From there she wrote her father a piteous and repentant letter in which she vowed that "neither Root nor branch should ever tear her from him!" This so tickled O'Neill's sense of humor that he forgave Peggy on the spot and let her come home at once to make more mischief.

"Hers was the highest type of Irish beauty," says Virginia Peacock; "a marvelous white skin, soft gray eyes, warm chestnut hair that curled above an expressive brow, exquisite features,

a small round chin, a delicately beautiful figure of medium height."

Soon she met and bewitched John Timberlake, a purser in the United States navy. For a time at least, she returned his devotion. There was an ardent wooing. Peggy bade all her other lovers a tearful farewell and allowed herself to be tied hard and fast to Timberlake in the bonds of matrimony. But, like the Huguenot lover when his sweetheart tied the handkerchief about his arm, Peggy kept one finger in the knot, so to speak; and Timberlake almost at once found his hands full, trying to keep that same knot from becoming untied. For Peggy loved a good time, and she loved admiration; and wherever she went there were always men flocking about to give her both.

She soon tired of Timberlake, who was not especially inspiring, anyway, and who was prone to drown his pangs of jealousy in drink. Also, on the horizon appeared John H. Eaton, United States senator, who was to play such a decided part later on in Peggy's life. Gossip already linked their names together, even as fate spun her mystic web about them.

Things went from bad to worse with poor old Timberlake. He worshiped his wife. He could not hold her love; life grew unbearable. He cut the knot at last by cutting his own throat. Dutifully, Peggy donned widow's weeds, which proved most becoming to the flower face they framed.

Once more she became the center of attraction at her father's tavern. Her few years of married life had broadened her vision and developed her quick brain. Her beauty was in full bloom. Her daring speeches were quoted far outside her simple sphere. The popular tavern became the rendezvous of many men famous in political circles—drawn thither by the irresistible lovely widow of the unfortunate Timberlake.

Among others came Senator John Eaton. Attracted by Peggy's wit, no less than her beauty, he was unable to keep away from her, and finally took up his abode at the comfortable, old house. His name, as I told you, had long been linked with hers; and no one knew better than he that the elusive Peggy needed constant watching.

He was many years older than she, and had as rivals a host of younger men; but from the first he interested her. Soon he paid open court, and offered her not only his heart, but his name. It was a tremendous feather in Peggy's cap; for of course Eaton's social position was miles above her own; and already he was spoken of as possible secretary of war in President Andrew Jackson's cabinet. Peggy hastened to say yes; and right there trouble began. The vivacious widow, it goes without saying, had no end of enemies among less attractive women. Up to now, this fact had bothered her not at all; as long as men loved her, the women could go hang!

But she found out her mistake.

As soon as it began to be whispered that Peggy might become the wife of the future secretary of war, she was attacked from all sides. Her life history was pried into with cold chisels. And, it must be admitted, that same history, though always racy and gay and delightful, was a bit murky—or at least foggy—in spots. It did not shine out with the crystal clearness that one likes to discover in the career of a cabinet minister's wife.

Worst of all, President Jackson was a widower. While his niece, Miss Donalson, of Tennessee, was titular mistress of the White House, much entertaining devolved on the ministers' wives. The very thought that Peggy O'Neill might entertain on equal terms with the others was too much for feminine Washington. Every woman in diplomatic society lifted her pure white shoulders and

turned her back in horror on "the barmaid."

Now John Eaton loved Peggy with all his soul. He could not imagine life without her. His dearest wish was to keep her by his side always as his lovely and adored wife. Yet he could not help hearing the clamor of gossip that roared loud and ever louder about his ears. He was heartbroken. He did not know how to stop it all; but stop it he would, he fiercely determined. Meanwhile, the tongues wagged faster and faster. Peggy seemed to be drowning in a whirlpool of gossip.

Eaton feared to make public denial of the scandal, lest it bring his sweet-heart into even greater unpleasant notice; also, perhaps, he feared matters would not bear stronger light. No one knows exactly what he did think; but at any rate, he felt that something must be done at once. So in despair, he went to his friend, the president.

"What shall I do?" he asked, at his wit's end.

"If you truly love her," said Jackson, "there is only one thing to do—marry her and put an end to all this talk!"

From this it is easy to guess that the great man already knew Peggy—Peggy of the appealing eyes, the winsome brow, and the saucy mouth! In his simplicity, the president imagined that marriage would close the lips of all the jealous scandalmongers! Any woman in cabinet circles—and, doubtless, Peggy herself—could have told him better than that.

Yet it was not entirely on Peggy's account that Jackson championed her cause. He believed absolutely in her innocence; but there was another reason. He had an old score to pay society, and a debt of reverent love to all distressed womanhood. May I digress just a moment to tell you about this? It is worth telling.

Jackson's own dearly beloved wife

was Rachel Donalson, who had first been unhappily married to Lewis Robards, a cur. The Robards were divorced, so Rachel and every one else believed, when she married Andrew Jackson. Some years later, Robards appeared with evidence that the divorce was not actually complete at the time Mrs. Robards and Jackson were married. Hastily, they had another ceremony performed. But when General Jackson's name came up for president, the whole story was raked over, and a false and most unpleasant interpretation of the matter was scattered broadcast.

The cruel attacks on Mrs. Jackson broke her heart. She was a sweet, simple, exemplary soul who lacked education, but had the kindest of hearts, and welcomed her husband's friends with warm hospitality. The two were ideally happy together, until Jackson's political enemies got hold of the gross lies about the marriage. The scandal so crushed Mrs. Jackson that she died only a few days after it was announced that her husband had won the presidency. Malice had killed her.

From that time on, the sorrowing and heartsick Jackson was merciless in his condemnation of gossip mongers. He was not a man who forgot. He had loved Rachel; she was the only woman in his life. And he sought to avenge her. So, when Peggy's troubles were brought to his notice, he constituted himself at once her knight-errant. Here was a chance to save a woman from his own wife's fate. He was too big-souled to realize that there was no more resemblance between Rachel and Peggy than between a dove and a cat.

Acting on Jackson's advice, Peggy and Senator Eaton were married without more ado, in January, 1829, and departed gleefully on their honeymoon, leaving Washington staring after them in smug horror.

On their return the storm broke.

As soon as the bride—whose husband was now secretary of war, thereby, supposedly, elevating her to the sacred cabinet circle—had unpacked the trunks holding her trousseau, she put on her prettiest frock and prepared to receive the cabinet ministers and their wives.

Nobody called.

Day after day she waited. Still no one came. Worse than that, she was invited nowhere. The wives and daughters of the cabinet not only refused to recognize Peggy's existence, but kept their men, for the most part, from doing so.

The president, ablaze with indignation and sympathy, fiercely ordered his cabinet to bid their wives call on Mrs. Eaton, to invite her to their homes, make her one of themselves.

The cabinet ministers had excuses. All were extremely sorry; but, apparently, they all were too henpecked to do as the president ordered regarding their wives or daughters. They said so themselves; but they, personally, were more than willing to meet Peggy and to bask in the light of her winsome smiles.

Among the recalcitrant wives, Mrs. John C. Calhoun, wife of the vice president, took the firmest stand. And the others were only too eager to follow Mrs. Calhoun's lead. The wife of the Dutch ambassador refused to sit by Peggy at a certain state function; she arose from her place, as soon as she found who her neighbor was to be, and walked angrily away. Peggy stared serenely after her, and exclaimed aloud:

"What a beautiful back she has!"

The incident came close to causing a serious clash with Holland; for the president threatened to send the ambassador and his offending wife home, and demanded an apology from them both.

Squabbles of this sort seemed always to be happening. Finally matters came to such a pass that Jackson reorganized his whole cabinet and transferred his

favor from Calhoun to Martin van Buren, then secretary of state, who had taken Jackson's side in the quarrel, and who showed marked attention to Peggy.

Martin van Buren, whose political nickname was "The Fox," was declared by many of his enemies to be a natural son of Aaron Burr. He was the jackal to Jackson's lion. And he owed his real start toward the presidency to Jackson's favor. He won this favor through his attitude toward Peggy Eaton, more than by any act of statesmanship. And as usual he was playing safe. For he was a widower, and thus he could champion Mrs. Eaton without fear of feminine reprisals.

But even turning a cabinet upside down did not seem to land the very bothersome little super-woman on her feet; for trouble and more trouble kept coming in the shape of unpleasant stories.

A man named Ely popped up with a brand-new scandal regarding Peggy's and Eaton's life before their marriage. Peggy tossed her head and said she didn't care a fig what people thought. Eaton, too, was weary of all the annoyance, and wanted to be left alone to adore Peggy in peace; but Jackson determined to nail the stories then and there, and to stop them forever. So he brought Ely into the limelight and ordered him to prove all his tales. This the man tried very hard to do, with the aid of a Mr. Campbell. But it turned out, as the president had shrewdly suspected, that there was no real proof at all, and that some of the scandal, if not the whole of it, was absolutely untrue.

Mr. Campbell was ordered by Jackson to vindicate Peggy before the entire cabinet. Furious, but helpless, the man complied. Peggy was triumphant. At least, so Jackson supposed. But he did not know how relentless a group of really determined women can be!

In less time than it takes to tell it,

new plots were hatched against Peggy. New stories floated merrily about. Washington fairly seethed with them.

The president never faltered in his determination to stand by Mrs. Eaton. He gave parties for her, fairly thrusting her down the throats of her enemies. He took pains to see that she appeared at every important social function at the White House. He even banished his niece, Miss Donalson, who had turned a cold shoulder on Peggy. The departure of this same niece was a real loss to him, too; for he depended on her to act as hostess in the White House; but he packed her off, bag and baggage, to her old home in Tennessee. Nor did he allow her to return to Washington until she apologized to Peggy and promised to be her friend from that time on. I have spoken of Miss Donalson as Jackson's "niece," because that was her official title at the time. She was really his wife's niece.

Peggy seems to have taken it all very philosophically. As long as there were men to dance and flirt with, why bother about women? As long as her husband and the president and many another worshiped her, why worry?

Yet poor Eaton was anything but happy. The more the president tried to smooth the pathway of the husband and wife, the harder became the position of the husband. Peggy was never out of the public eye, for one reason or another. Finally, after an especially unpleasant rumor, Eaton challenged Samuel Ingham, the secretary of state, to a duel.

Ingham fled incontinently, so there was no duel. This was said to disappoint the charming Peggy. But, although Ingham was no longer there, there were always others to whisper in corners. And Eaton could not fight the whole world. He did his best by challenging Campbell, who also refused to fight, and threatening to challenge half a dozen others. Nor could the

chivalrous Jackson take up the cudgels for him with any success.

So, at last, the president took the only way out of it. He sent Eaton to Madrid as Spanish minister, and begged him to take his lovely, but troublesome wife with him and keep her away for a while.

At first, Peggy was entranced with Spain, but before long she found court life there intolerably dull. She was tied to an elderly husband who had begun to tire of her gay enthusiasms. The Spanish court was solemn and quiet in comparison to the feverish life Peggy had led in uncertain Washington. Thoroughly disgusted and bored, she wrote to her faithful friend, the president, begging him to let them come home. But Jackson at last had learned his lesson. Very wisely he said "No!"

So the Eatons stuck it out as best they could a while longer.

When, finally, they returned to America, love's young dream was very much a thing of the past. Eaton, a bitterly disappointed man, turned, I am ashamed to say, to snap at the kindly hand that had fed him. After an especially fierce quarrel with Peggy, he accused Jackson of being the cause of all his misery. Had it not been for the president, he reasoned, he would never have married Peggy in the first place. He even blamed him for the scandal with which Peggy's name was ever clouded. To do the little "storm center" justice, she always gave Jackson full credit for the thousand things he did to help her. She idolized him.

Though she outlived both men by many years, she did not outlive her charm, for she was always surrounded by adorers. Some time after Eaton died, she married an Italian dancing master, Antonio Buchignani. This affair lasted only a short time; Peggy squeezed herself out of it through the back door of married life—the divorce court.

This was her final matrimonial fling, though she kept her power over men and the love of mischief to the very last. She died in 1879, having got out of life all the fun that came her way.

If her heart burned with indignation at times, she kept it to herself. If she longed, just once in a while, to be sheltered by the smug respectability of

the people who shunned her, she never let them know that she cared. But she *must* have cared sometimes, don't you think?

In spite of endless warfare, Peggy loved life to the end.

"I'm not afraid to die," were her last words, "but, oh, it's such a beautiful world to leave!"



PRELUDE TO THE BOOK OF PIERROT

LAUGHING, Pierrot would hide
His scars of sorrow,
And with a friend divide
Joy for the morrow.

Quaffing, Pierrot would drink
Wine of the spirit,
And to hell blithely sink,
Were beauty near it.

Crying, Pierrot would sound
Dirges of warning,
Building his song around
A scorn of scorning.

Sighing, Pierrot would sing
Songs for the sages,
Quelled in the echoing
Sob of the ages.

WILLIAM GRIFFITH.



The Golden Ship

By Jack Bechdolt

Author of "A Contract's a Contract"

TWO men met before the golden ship which stands in a spot where the ocean currents of humanity from every corner of the earth meet and mingle for a time, forming a little dead water or Sargasso Sea that everybody knows as old Portsmouth Square. It is one of those places where all the colors—white, yellow, red, brown, and black—mingle, and in his time every manner of man lingers in a momentary idleness.

One was a big, bearded, hearty fellow with a weather-tanned skin. In spite of his heavy clothes he shivered a little at the premonitory chill of San Francisco's late afternoon sunlight in the manner of a man accustomed to tropical enervation. He stopped to study the inscription that is cut on the shaft supporting the golden ship:

To be honest, to be kind—To earn a little, to spend a little less—To make upon the whole a family happier for his presence—To renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered—To keep a few friends, but these without capitulation—Above all on the same grim conditions to keep friends with himself—Here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy.

The second man sidled alongside him and watched the brown face and the moving lips as they repeated the words. This second man in some way suggested physical deformity or crippling, though it was not apparent in his figure nor exactly in his walk or carriage. The suggestion seemed to come from his face, peculiarly waxy white of skin and incongruously assorted as to feature. Traces of old scars had seamed the cheeks.

The eyes of the two men met and

the brown fellow smiled in a vaguely friendly manner. "Well, cap, what d'you think of it?" asked the other, indicating the inscription.

The brown man answered him gravely, with a careful deliberation. "That's been my Bible, mate. Brought up on it; believed it; tried to follow it. And I agree with the chap who wrote it in one thing—it's a hell of a job."

"Get you anything?"

"Happiness, you mean? Can't say it has, but I'm sailing in the morning, back to the islands. Want to hear the yarn?"

I had a chum. His name was Trent—Dick Trent. Took him to live with my folks when his father was lost at sea. Later we started life together, working on coastwise schooners. Here in Frisco we used to have one room, one bed, one pocketbook, and one girl. That's where trouble always starts—with a girl.

She was Jeanie Ross, daughter of a skipper. A yellow-haired girl, straight and slender like a young palm, and with eyes like the night sky in the south seas. Thoughts as clean as a new-swept beach.

Dick got his first officer's papers about the time I did. I was going out to the south Pacific with a survey ship, and I boosted him, through a pull, into a berth on a whaler going North for two years.

It was a fair fight for Jeanie Ross, the sort two young damn fools full of ideas and friendship would make. And she told both of us to wait. "Wait till

you sail back to me," she said. She smiled, a smile I'd rather own than a full-rigged clipper ship like they used to send out to China. "Boys, I want one of you to win me, but I don't know yet which one. I think the one who loves me best will manage to get home first, and I'll take that one. Race for it, boys. See who gets home first!"

But when she said good-by to me Jeanie added, "John Ryan, I'm counting on you. Get home, John—first." And she let me kiss her. Likely as not she told the same thing to Trent, being only a girl and lively, but I went out of the Gate happy as a king, never doubting who'd win that race and Jeanie.

Ordinarily it would have been a close race. Both ships were due back about the same time. Oh, I was dead sure!

We picked up a derelict schooner, the *Hivahoo*. My skipper offered me a chance to earn prize money, sailing her into Papeete with a couple boys to help. That's how I got wrecked on Aoa. The boys were lost when we hit a reef in a hurricane, and there I was on a chip off the original Garden of Eden, in company with a half hundred friendly brown folks.

Maybe you know how it is in those islands? Calm as a long Sunday afternoon with your mother. One minute's like the next, one hour, one day, a month, a year—forever and ever, world without end, and pretty soon, unless you've got the guts to fight it off, God help you!

I came there full of fight, with nothing in my thoughts but Jeanie Ross and how I'd get back to her.

I knew my ship would be back by the end of the year, on her way to Papeete to pick me up according to promise. I figured her course would take her near to Aoa and I could hail her. Only one thing tormented me, I was afraid I'd lose my reckoning of time, lose count of the days, and miss my

ship. Like an aching tooth, that worry was.

To fix that I started a calendar. Every day I dropped a white pebble into a coconut bowl I kept in my hut. A pebble a day, and I got so sick of counting them one day I swore I'd forget the count. It was like swearing off drink, but I had to do that or go mad.

Like the Garden of Eden, Aoa was, or maybe a bit of paradise itself, but with a heap plenty trouble in it, too. Imeoo was her name, brown and mostly naked, with always a bit of hibiscus stuck in her black hair.

She hung about my camp all the time. When I'd turn out in the morning and come back from my swim and find a white pebble to add to my calendar—always started the day that way—I'd see her watching me from the bush. She'd bring me little presents, too—red avees, yams, breadfruit, such truck.

Every morning when I'd drop a stone into my calendar and say a little prayer to God to get me home to Jeanie Ross in time, there she'd be, watching me. My God, I couldn't have that going on!

I had to tell her about Jeanie Ross. It was a morning she'd roasted my breadfruit and spread out plates of pooroo leaves. She announced, brazen as you please, that she was my woman and had come to live with me. Funny thing! It was the bowlful of pebbles finally convinced her she wasn't wanted. Poor Imeoo, she'd taken the notion this bowl was my god and I prayed to it every morning. She was all for making my god her god, silly little heathen! Then I had to tell her how I prayed to this god to take me home to the woman I loved, a white woman like me, and she understood.

Oh, but she understood then!

She listened to me, perfectly still, but some way her eyes reminded me

of a leopard's. Then, before I could stop her, she'd grabbed my bowl of pebbles—my calendar—and run off with it.

"That for your false woman and your false god!" she shrieked, running ahead of me. "See, Tuan Eorma, I destroy your god!" Before I could stop her she'd thrown the bowl, the pebbles flying every way, the count of the days lost forever.

That sent me fair crazy. You see, I'd made myself swear off counting the days. My only reckoning was gone. And there was the memory of all that waiting—the thought of Jeanie Ross and those terrible long nights and those damned days, each one like the other. I ran off into the bush, crazy as a loon. I must have stayed there for days.

And when I came back my ship had been after me and gone again. They'd even sent a boat in to the beach, and that Imeoo—well, poor heathen, maybe she was crazy, too—she lied to them. Said there wasn't any white man there. Told the natives I'd killed myself. I wish sometimes I had!

A ship did come—must have been about three or four months later. She was a trading schooner from Papeete, bringing a load of cattle a syndicate was going to try on island grazing. Skipper begged me to stay and watch the herds; offered me a fair living.

I was all on fire to go away. Had it figured out how I could still get back to Frisco ahead of Dick Trent; how I'd win Jeanie Ross spite of hell and high water. Then I happened to mention Trent's ship and I got the news.

The whaler had gone down off western Alaska; crew saved; all brought back to Frisco six months after they sailed. Dick Trent got home first!

You see how it was, don't you? I'd promised Dick that the first one of us home should have a clear course for Jeanie. Dick was my friend, and I'd passed my word.

To renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered— To keep a friend—

That was my Bible, and I never forgot it, even out there!

I told the trader I'd changed my mind. I stayed on Aoa, looking after his cattle, stayed almost fourteen years, the schooner calling once a year to bring my supplies. I got to think I'd live and die there, and yet I lived on alone. You see, "*Above all on the same grim conditions*" I had to keep friends with myself. And all of myself I'd given to Jeanie Ross. Yes, there were plenty of women about, but, well—

You wonder what ever brought me back, I suppose?

That was Imeoo again.

There was just one place on Aoa I couldn't stand the sight of—avoided like the plague. That was my old camp where I'd gone through that hell of waiting. I'd moved inland, out of sight of the sea, and I tried to forget there was a sea or any world besides that sunny, sleepy, Sunday-afternoon island.

A few months ago I followed up some lost cattle and stumbled on my old hut. All overgrown and buried under vines now, but I knew the spot. The spring was there and the little grove around it, and—Imeoo!

You won't believe this. I couldn't. But it's gospel. Imeoo was there, in the little grove, and when I saw what the woman was doing—by Jove, mate, I didn't know whether I was going to laugh or cry. Don't know yet!

You see, she had a bowl, one of those polished coconut shells, and she'd filled it with pebbles, like my old calendar bowl. She was praying to it!

Get that? She was praying to my god, the poor, damned, misguided heathen!

The best she knew how, Imeoo was faithful to me; and near fifteen years had gone by.

If I'd murdered her I couldn't have

sneaked away with a guiltier load on my back.

And that's the thing brought me back here. It came on me that night. "Suppose Jeanie Ross had loved you?" I said to myself. And I remembered her words and her kiss she gave me. Never thought of it that way before, but suppose she had been faithful. I argued it that if a silly, ignorant, brown girl felt that way, just suppose— You see, I was in a crazy rage till the schooner called again and I could come back to find out.

The sun had gone from the square, and the evening fog, the thick, chill, still fog that muffles San Francisco, was creeping around them, blurring out the lights from Chinatown at their back.

"Well, you found out?" asked the man who had listened.

John Ryan blew out a great breath, expressive of disappointment—resignation.

"No. Forgot how long fifteen years is, forgot the big fire back in 1906, forgot how the world keeps juggling people about. I found out nothing. No word of Trent. And Jeanie Ross—vanished completely. I've looked, I've asked. Worn my shoes out tramping; worn my heart out hoping. I'm through—sailing back to-morrow. Yes, I tried to follow the course that fellow wrote out under his little gold ship and where's it led to? I'll die wondering, I guess."

"Hold on," said the other man as Ryan rose. "Wait! You needn't die wondering, buddy. I can answer that and I'm going to. You see, I knew this chap Trent once—know what became of him.

"Trent got back from the North like you heard. He asked Jeanie Ross to marry him. She said she loved another man, John Ryan. Trent tried a long

time, five or six years off and on. Jeanie Ross was faithful. Wait! Listen!

"Finally Trent drifted to British Columbia. Got himself into the war against Germany. Got blown up some way, so I hear, all mangled up. They finally patched him together again, though his friends didn't know him when they saw the new edition. He came back to Jeanie. She was ready to marry him then—out of pity, I expect. But Trent he—well, he is keeping out of it. Guess he figures he couldn't make Jeanie really happy, the way she feels about Ryan."

Ryan's powerful fingers sank deep into the other's shoulder. "Look here, you!" he panted. "How the hell d'you know all this?"

"Wait a bit. Steady, Ryan! Listen to me. You followed that fellow's chart, and the chart's all right. All right, I tell you! You kept a friend, John, *you kept one friend*. Look, there down the walk, under the eucalyptus. That's Jeanie. I know! Every night I watch here for her, follow her to be sure she gets safe home. Go on, man, speak to her. That's Jeanie—Jeanie Ross. Yours, Ryan, waiting for you—loving you."

Ryan startled, hesitated, turned toward the figure of a woman nearing them. The other paused a moment before the golden ship as if to memorize the course it sailed. His lips moved over the familiar words: "To renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered—to keep friends with himself." John was right; it's a job—a hell of a job!"

He glanced back to where the figures of a man and woman had merged into one silhouette; then, scarred by war and patched beyond recognition of his friends, Dick Trent slipped away and was lost in the fog.





W e g

By Violet Irwin



WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

Letitia Rothwell, a subdued spinster, has made a modest fortune in Twiller-Twisters, a constantly reversible and uncomfortable knitted sock for soldiers. By means of this fortune, she has been supporting the family estate, Roths' Well, and incidentally her brother, Colonel Rothwell, the nominal master, of much depleted fortune, and his older daughter, Roselle. Weg, the younger daughter, although genuinely fond of her aunt, despises the pretenses of her father and Roselle at Roths' Well, and decides after her demobilization from war service to go to London "on her own."

Arriving in London late at night, she finds all the hotels crowded. She persuades Spigley, of Pink's Hotel, a former butler at Roths' Well, to give her half of the suite of a touring American millionaire, Cornelius Tomlins, of Sue Luck City. Spigley, who is much more concerned about the unconventionality of the situation than Weg, arranges that she shall slip into her room late, and leave it early in the morning before the American learns that it is not a man, but a woman in uniform, who has been sharing the suite. Weg, delighted by the novel situation, insists that Spigley point out Tomlins next day, and learns that with him are the Higginbotham Boneses, Alfred and Bella, also of Sue Luck City.

Convinced that Cornelius Tomlins would be quite eligible for her sister, Roselle, Weg tells her and aunt Letitia of the incident on her next visit at Roths' Well. Aunt Letitia discovers that they have mutual friends who can introduce the Higginbotham Boneses and also Tomlins. Weg returns to London to her position as chauffeuse, anticipating with amusement what will probably follow this introduction.

Tomlins, on his first trip abroad, is making a conscientious, even serious, study of the English people, especially English women, whom he has shrouded in romantic glamour. He is of a poetical temperament, driven by his family into law. His fortune has spared him the necessity of practicing.

CHAPTER IV.

ROSELLE seized on the lawn-fête peace celebration given by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brant Tucker, the new owners of Roths' Well, as a providential opportunity not only to entertain her American friends "in return for their many kindnesses," as she phrased the thought to them, but also to "let Cornelius Tomlins see who and what we are," as she phrased it to her family.

"Have been," Weg unkindly corrected, and was promptly squashed.

Roselle, like the colonel, repudiated change and clung to her first form.

"That 's too bizarre! Wherever we may happen to live we are Rothwells of Roths' Well—I dare say I shall buy the place back some day."

"The Tomlins of Roths' Well," murmured Weg. "Doesn't sound very sporting, does it? But reconcile yourself, old thing. Any man wanting to plant a family tree is bound to put his name on his allotment. Sustained by the worthy example of our Norman ancestors, he will doubtless call it Tom's Lindens."

The colonel rumbled something about not counting chickens before they were hatched. In spite of his pose, persistent

detachment, he was glad enough to invite the party to dinner and size up his daughter's chances. Besides, Albert Bones would be an asset. When rain prevented golf, the colonel read stock reports and thought about the city. Should a gentleman be obliged finally to mix the gritty sands of business and the loam of life, he might as well puddle with a long-handled spoon.

Mrs. Bones, on her side, was more than charmed. Longing to prattle convincingly in Sue Luck of English country places; and not having yet been asked to so much as set foot inside a park paling, she grabbed their invitation. So it was arranged the three visitors would motor down from London, pick up Roselle, and proceed to the fête; the colonel and Letitia were to follow. Weg wrote refusal, not knowing how or where she would be employed at the time; and Arthur Mosely begged off. He chose rather to spend a productive afternoon with the reminiscences in his vine-hung cottage just beyond the rectory wall.

Roselle, for all her early-Victorian ideas a lady of determined character, had worked some epoch-making changes on her American friend. To begin with, she had fascinated Tomlins, and then had fashioned him, or refashioned him to suit the British eye. Delicacy of feeling—particularly another person's feeling—would never be allowed to stand between her and the correct thing. "It isn't done," knelled in Cornelius' ears the death of individuality. He bowed to beauty's whim, and made the round of Colonel Rothwell's hatter and tailor and bootmaker and that general-purpose renovator who, on his native heath, would have been called a haberdasher.

He emerged a very proper bean pole, indeed, quick with athletic promise and standing erect in his glory; at least that is how Roselle saw him.

The enamored youth surveyed him-

self in Pink's glass walls with satisfaction. His mentors separately approved him. Spigley even went so far as to suggest a monocle, which brought the vaulting moment back to sanity. No power on earth, Cornelius swore, should part him from his spectacles or his views on English life.

Between frivolities he conscientiously devoured the serious side; bit off historic chunks from London, masticated them in solitude, and claimed assimilation of her processes—financial, social, and official. Roselle at first had played the part of specimen. He wished to study her, he told himself, darting moth-like in and out the flame. And while still fancifully charmed by "Meg" of his midnight adventure, he quite deliberately set about cultivating this flower of the English aristocracy.

Ere peace spread her festive wings above the land Cornelius was far gone along the way of courtship. Misgivings of Roselle being a "real woman," or measuring up to American standards as known in Sue Luck City, beset him from the start; but in the glamour of her smiles they lulled themselves to sleep. He blamed the rub on nationality. Of course she was "different!" Was not this what the young man had come out for to see? Was not this the very thing he desired?

He hoped, he feared, he almost determined, he wobbled, while the huntress stalked her game expertly in slow, considered moves. She had him under her paw, so to speak, and with feline delight played him for play's sake. Selfish reasons made her unwilling to hasten the final pounce. Her marriage with a Tomlins could be nothing but a sacrifice to the god Moloch, more her father's affair than her own; but holding Cornelius in the background, valid guarantee against a champagneless old age, suited her well.

The fête proved a tremendous suc-

cess. When every member of a party sets out to be pleased, every one generally is pleased, with themselves and every one else.

There were thrills for all.

Bella Bones, on seeing robust fellows in close, round caps working in the fields, and being told they were war prisoners, expressed herself freely:

"My sakes! Loose like that—won't they get away or something?"

"Get away! How could a fellow with scarlet patches as big as saucers on the seat of his pants get away? And where would he want to get to looking like a monkey?"

"I'm sure I don't know, but they might murder us. Just you tell the driver to speed up, Albert Bones."

Aunt Letitia felt thrilled when General Lawlor, rotund, mauve-complexioned, short in wind and words, a wreck of a once handsome man, gallantly escorting her to the riverside to see the floats, he made offer of his heart, hand, and pension, with the yet more deplorable wreck of his fortunes—a shoot in Scotland, a house in town, and two estates, all heavily mortgaged and taxed beyond despair.

Cornelius was thrilled—but that is a longer story.

Tricks new and old in sensation had been arranged for the pleasure of guests assembled from an area including three towns and two villages. Punch in his gilded pagoda squawked his familiar threats. Gayly harnessed donkeys ambled on the carriage drives. Prizes were offered for sack races and like grotesque exhibitions of fleetness and strength. A coconut shy vied with the swings, while cricket down below disputed the attractions of an intermittent band. Interest fluctuated. Each show enjoyed recurrent favor; but a tent set up near the bowling green kept its crowd around it.

"A gypsy fortune teller! Silly old gag!" Roselle tossed her pretty head,

scoffing as Cornelius pressed her. "Why such an urgent optimist? She might say horrid things, might show me a snake in my Eden—not that I'd believe a word of her silly rubbish. No, no. Positively, no. It is too idiotic. You go in and I'll wait here."

Tomlins felt rather dashed, but he was secretly keen on such stunts, and any one of unprejudiced mind must have owned to rampant curiosity. Something unique seemed to be happening. This was no ordinary garden seer. Half the staff from the neighboring camp were hanging around hungry to consult her, and the other half generously sharing their experiences.

Sentiment pampers superstition, nurses it on the bottle, so to speak. Cornelius was chock-full of sentiment. He entered the tent in a septic mood; he honestly thought an old woman who could read one's immediate past like a book, as this hag did, should be credited with a premonition of things to come. She thrilled him with ambient fairy and planted a star in his future. He went in curious and came out awed.

"Quite a decent rag," the second lieutenant was assuring Roselle. "It isn't only one of us she's hit off, but every one of us. Little Grindly trundled over to the punts for me and absolutely insisted on his dashed recommendation: 'Told me every sin I ever enjoyed, dash it! 'My good idiot, don't talk such utter imbecility!' I said; so he brought me along. And it's a rum go, but she turned the trick. Gave me the hang of my misdeeds generally—quite a noble list."

The second lieutenant would have liked to detach Roselle from her American, and she seemed agreeable; but Tomlins quietly refused to be detached. They could not shake him off. Kindly but firmly he hung on through the most open maneuvers, trailing his length along behind like an evening chill, till at last the novel embarrassment sent a

stabbing fear into the girl's heart. What had come over him? Why was he asserting himself? Dare the man turn jealous and insistent and impossible on her hands when the world was wagging so nicely?

As Roselle wasted no fraction of thought on her conversation under any circumstances, it was perfectly simple for her to rattle along naturally, with this throbbing problem hid in the back of her brain while they doubly conducted her to the grand tea.

"To see the animals feed?" Cornelius had asked with evident distaste, whereupon Bertram put him down as a bounder.

But if Tomlins' sense of fitness balked at making the appetites of his fellow beings an exhibition, Bella Bones entered into the scene with sufficient gusto to equalize their national poise. Flanked on one side by Sir William Mudges, M. P., and on the other by Lord Dewkes, she circled the tennis lawns with an indefatigable interest almost regal. She wallowed neck-deep in patronage.

"All this reminds me so much of dear grandpapa's stories of *our* 'good old days before the war' in Richmond. It is just the same as when he used to give his slaves a holiday and treat. Of course our dependents were black, and I guess tenants are a bit more uppish, but the spirit of both functions breathes allegiance."

Albert smiled, aware his wife was trying to put one over on these English. Her grandfather, to be sure, had owned a few dusky souls, but her mother had disgraced tradition by running away with a Yankee drummer. She herself was a half and half, and weak in political history, it seemed. She had laid it on a trifle too thick.

"Our guests to-day are not tenants, dear Mrs. Bones," the hostess explained sweetly. "Roths' Well is only a small place—the park and two or three farms.

These people are splendidly independent—tradespeople and freeholders. I saw a number of our suburban neighbors on the lawn, and the local clergy with some energetic church members are kindly helping us to serve. Surely you will not find anything in England paralleling slavery!"

"Unless it is the condition of the landed gentry," growled the colonel, who had been literally eaten out of Roth's Well by rates and taxes and was angrily conscious of standing a guest on his own hearth.

"Cream or lemon, Mr. Tomlins?" interrupted the lady. She dreaded Colonel Rothwell on any of his hobbies.

Cornelius, feeling himself flagged, entered the conversation promptly.

"In my part of America, on such an occasion as this, hosts and guests would all be eating together."

"We thought of it," Mrs. Tucker owned gratefully. "But a private party under cover seemed to offer less offense than feudalism. The day of seating retainers below the salt is gone."

Nobody ever knew what gem of wisdom on mixing with the proletariat Cornelius was about to utter. He began:

"If your father had started life as a tailor——"

And his words fell on the semisilence like a blow. Innocent, yet conscious of catastrophe, he looked about to find its source; then met Mrs. Tucker's level, intelligent glance.

Into that appalling aristocratic calm she dropped the words:

"He did," with admirably modulated voice.

"You don't say! So did mine—and mamma was a schoolma'am." Mr. Tomlins beamed on her through his thick lenses, genuinely pleased. Here was freemasonry to warm the cockles of a stranger's heart.

But in putting the Westerner at his ease the hostess had made the rest of

her guests a thousandfold uncomfortable. Roselle exchanged an agonized look with the second lieutenant. They knew Maude Tucker, for all her nerve, was at heart slightly more snobbish than the fashionable few. She could be glib to choke their secret laughter, and muzzle gossip's hound by quick acknowledgment—doing her best to ally sympathy—and had undoubtedly scored. But she would never forgive Cornelius!

This solecism, coupled with the American's proprietary attitude, sickened Roselle. "What is the use of dressing him up like a gentleman?" she asked herself. Could she do it, after all? Doubts absorbed her on the drive home, varied, for comparison, by uniforms and titles.

She neglected Tomlins at dinner. Only once did he gain her attention.

A sound of wheels on gravel startled them, and the colonel's raised eyebrows sent Draper to inquire.

"Miss Weg, sir," he later announced. "She 'as 'ad a trying day, sir, and begs to be hexcused."

Cornelius jumped.

"My sister from London," Roselle explained.

"Is her name Margaret?" the man asked eagerly.

"No. St. Clair Olivia." His hostess regarded him coldly as though to say, "What business is it of yours?" and engaged Mr. Bones in small talk.

After dinner things were easier. Mosely dropped in for coffee and struck a harmonious chord with Tomlins on landmarks of antiquity. Deep in discussion, the two men sought the terrace, smoking. Aunt Letitia stole away. Colonel Rothwell expounded golf to Mrs. Bones. Albert was left on Roselle's hands—expert hands! They also wandered out to smoke; for Bella, who had met a lord and three honorables that afternoon, and drunk old port in a baronial hall, was too replete with satis-

faction for any other strong emotion, even jealousy.

"Poor Weg! She has missed all the fun as usual, poor dear child!" thought Aunt Letitia, jingling upstairs, keen to hear what sent her niece abroad at such ungodly hours, and all that had happened to her since the bread strike.

These unheralded arrivals between jobs formed the chief excitement of Miss Rothwell's life. Weg always landed bursting with news, and her spinster relative sat at her feet drinking enviously the well-told tales so varied and so thrilling. But to-night a new element locked their embrace. Letitia was shy. Letitia was excited. She fluttered toward confession. She had a story of her own.

Weg, arrayed in an old pink dressing gown, gobbling an ice, felt the change and angled for its cause. But confidence at forty-five is chary.

"Your face, dear child!" cried Letitia, regarding a terribly blotched skin and streaky head. "And your hair! Whatever have you done to your beautiful hair?"

"Make-up," laughed her niece. "Old thing, I've had a fizzing time! What I don't know about our neighbors isn't knowledge."

"But you've missed everything! And it has been a wonderful day. I do wish you had been here."

"Here!" exclaimed Weg. "I was *there*, my sunny cherub!" she burst into renewed peals.

But Letitia for once seemed quite self-centered. "Oh, Weg," she cried, "I am growing younger every day!"

"You old trump! I believe you are!" The girl seized her aunt around the waist and jazzed her up the room. "Sit down now and tell me all about it. I haven't seen you for a dog's age. Not since you went gallivanting with Arthur Mosely. What did Roselle say? How did she like your get-up? Has she borrowed the Parisian plumes yet?"

"My life, no! I have not shown them to Roselle. We could not tell her." And lowering her voice: "I feared she might be unsympathetic, a little jealous, seeing it was Arthur. No woman likes to lose a beau, my dear, however much she scorns him. So I have laid the dress away. Some time we are going up to a concert, and then I'll wear it."

"Dear wiseacre," said Weg, patting her arm. "I know Roselle's a brute. But tell me, why so cheery—has somebody been proposing?" She spoke in airy persiflage, audacious youth naming the most unheard-of thing.

"Yes—just that. To-day I received an offer of marriage. The first one I have ever had. I find it stimulating."

By a stern exercise of will the girl held herself from gaping. She made a desperate effort to cover her surprise; not for worlds would she have hurt Letitia's feelings.

"Then you can give me a handicap, for I've never had any."

"Pooh! As if we didn't know the men are dogging your steps."

"Oh, that's different. I expect they dogged yours, and you did as I have done, shooed them all off before they kenneled."

"No," the spinster replied honestly. "None of them ever tried to kennel. When I was in my teens customs were very different. Society knew better than to look for a dowry out of Roths' Well. Your father and your grandfather had both gone the pace."

"Rotten!" murmured Weg.

A silence fell between the two, while heavy perfumes, borne from the garden, quickened their imaginations. They shared one vision: the figure of a slim girl growing up at Roths' Well, flitting on the lawns in muslin, coursing in tweed, shooting, boating, riding, playing tennis—marking time. A girl with hopeful eyes, full lips, an exquisite skin, charming manners, and ready laughter.

A girl to dance and walk beside, admire and leave—a girl without a dowry.

Letitia's voice announced the current of their thoughts. "Thank God that is all over, done, buried. Men will be men now, self-supporting, or else we can work ourselves and marry out of our class; perhaps some day we will even do the proposing—officially, I mean."

The younger woman smiled. "Where did it take place?" she demanded, partly to fill up. She was too stunned for bright congratulation and scented trouble. The family lay an open book to Weg, its style engraven on her mind. She did not need to read the text, and she could pretty accurately describe the next picture before turning a page. Now on the dark-curtained summer night she saw a panorama of eruption, with poor Letitia, shackled by her affection for them all, held captive at the crater's mouth. Her father, financially upset, would spout hot lava, and Roselle boil forth caste platitudes; till nuptial joy succumbed in dust and ashes. In other words, there would be a hell of a row!

Preoccupied, she listened with only half an ear to the shyly spoken answer:

"Down by the river—where it narrows under the great oak." Letitia was thinking how easily the scene might have happened there a quarter of a century earlier.

"But Draper told me Arthur didn't go to Roths' Well!" cried Weg.

"Arthur!"

The blood rushed into her aunt's face, which looked unbelievably proud. "Who mentioned Arthur Mosely? It was the general, my dear."

What a difference! Weg's heart gave a leap. "Am I a miserable snob?" she asked secretly, while clasping and kissing the bride.

"I'm so glad, dear thing! He ought to have done it years ago. Dad will be bucked!"

"Oh, no—no!" Letitia gasped, extricating herself in jingling embarrassment. "He'll be simply furious. I refused."

"Scrapped old Tom!" Weg stared, fresh revelation of her aunt upon her; then roared. "Priceless—what?"

The spinster suddenly ceased fluttering and drew herself up to her full height. Refusing matrimony certainly adds to a woman's dignity and backbone.

"Do you imagine for a second I would marry Tom Lawlor now? It is only my money he wants."

"I always thought he was keen on you," murmured her niece, abashed.

"So did I, long ago. But he was never as keen on me as on his horses and dogs. He did not love me enough to give any of them up. He married a Scotch frump and ran through her fortune. He is incapable of affection—just like your poor dear father. They find it too much trouble. There isn't one man in ten thousand who knows anything about love. We women go to church on Sundays and learn what it is, and the rest of the time we learn what it is not! 'Love suffereth long and is kind; love seeketh not its own, is not puffed up, vaunteth not itself, does not behave itself unseemly.' Is that, I ask you, a pen portrait of Tom Lawlor?"

"Not what you'd notice," Weg admitted, recalling the general's bombastic voice, bottle complexion, and minted selfishness. "He's a fair vaunter, isn't he? But the position, old bean. Don't forget 'officers' wives gets puddin's and pies.'"

"And who is to pay for them?" asked Letitia curtly. "No, my dear. Most spinsters are very well off as they are. But it was a satisfaction to refuse Tom; I gloried in doing it!"

"Of course you did! You utterly adorably human aunt Let! I only wish I had caught him later on and rubbed

the ointment in. I've had no end of opportunity.

"Listen. I'm an oracle—but not a soul knows except Charles Brant Tucker. We arranged the rag between us. I was having a pretty thin time in town so thin you could spit through it. Don't wince. It reminds me of Roselle. Am I vulgar? Forgive me, then. That is a perfectly sound phrase culled from a silk merchant to whom I applied for a living wage, and will give you an idea of his general style and why I was willing to come off the job when I met Charley. We commenced chinning, and he promised to do me well if I'd help him by being a gypsy. He wanted to work off an old score on the camp and get a jab at some of his constituents. I swore not to blow the gaff, so he loaded me up with pointers. And, my word! haven't we roused sleeping dogs! It was child's play. Imagine telling the past and future to Teddy Long? We got right in among it—and the fools so serious!"

"But you couldn't know a thing about those young officers, and I heard they were simply thrilled."

"Sheer genius!" chortled Weg. "There will be a fine row in the mess to-night when they start comparing notes. The C. O. came in first at Charles' request. Having been primed about him of course I made a killing. He's a sporting old bird—the C. O.—never said boo! But in five minutes he was back with Major Rise. Army scandals are an open secret. I gave it to Rise straight from the shoulder, trying to look wizardy and awfully far away, and he went out as pink as a cock's comb, ready to lay violent hands on the first man he met.

"I wish you could have seen my make-up. Tucker had it done by the best theatrical expert in London, and the whole place was dark except for one colored lamp arranged to illuminate the victim's face.

"I stalled along a while on some girls, and the next officer was a stranger—a small fat one wearing a monocle. There was nothing to do but pull the regular stuff of a blonde and a brunette, till a twitch under his baby mustache gave me the count. 'There is a woman you love,' I said, solemn as a warden, 'and you used to be true to her, but you are true no longer.' The fool melted like wax. I positively thought he was going to blubber. 'You win,' he cried, or words to that effect, 'but it's not my fault. It's the war does it.'"

"Poor man! How could you be so heartless?" exclaimed Letitia, softened since her tirade against the sex.

Weg only laughed. "He ran about telling everybody I was a witch, and the curious began to trek in from all directions. My powers of invention faltered. By mistake a sheepish captain received the same sort of talk and wilted, too. Then I saw the thing was cushie and rationed it out. An elastic sentence, like the gypsy stock in trade, but a barb where it happens to catch. They didn't all confess, but they were all more or less hit. One knew it by their hangdog looks."

"Nasty creatures! I don't believe I'll marry at all if I have to marry a man!"

Weg rolled on the bed in helpless mirth.

"Don't be too hard on the poor beaux! If you could have seen their discomfiture! And Tomlins—Roselle's own! That American is a scream! He was steeped to the gills in serious purpose. When he doubled himself into a camp chair, I thought of the last time we were alone together and nearly gave the show away. I made him my crowning laurel. One hint of twin beds at Pink's put us en rapport! He told me a great deal more than I told him, dear innocent youth. He's sentimental—entertains a romantic passion for the

woman who wore khaki and trusted him!

"I wanted to pave the way for sis, so I told him he would marry a colonel's daughter—a beautiful, fair, tall, graceful English rose. The description, if flattering, was unmistakable."

"Oh, what have you done!" cried Letitia, throwing out her hands with a violent clash of tinkling gold. "Roselle told me before dinner that Tomlins had been bossing her around all afternoon in a most disgustingly impertinent way. She is ready to give the whole thing up, and has been behaving vilely to him this evening. If he has a spark of pride he can never forgive her. I am afraid you have put your foot right through it!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Weg. "See what comes of trying to help one's relations."

CHAPTER VI.

"What's the trouble?"

Cornelius Tomlins stuck his head out of an open taxi, and wound his length around to the driver's ear.

"One of these 'ere blinkin' street teas right across the bloody thoroughfare. I'm fed up with 'em, I am. 'Ave to go around the block again."

The cab began to back slowly.

"No, you don't!" cried Cornelius. "Stop it! Whoa! I'm only out sight-seeing," he explained. "I'll take in this party. It's as good as anything." He was so thoroughly down in the mouth nothing mattered.

Roselle, the fair, suddenly and without warning, had given him the cold shoulder. Modestly admitting the blame must be his, Tomlins racked his brains to think of a single instance where devotion had faltered or his attentions flagged. He could not find the clew. He had plunged headlong into courtship after the fête, and never guessed her annoyance. So flowers and bonbons flowed in the damsel's direction

with that steady persistence approved by Sue Luck City's best society. They embarrassed Roselle.

The facetious Weg suggested rivaling Draper by opening a sweets shop. Aunt Letitia penned brief notes of thanks for very shame's sake. Her niece remained obdurate. She cherished twin grievances against Cornelius, while he, sublimely unconscious of either, held to his course.

The American was too honestly ingenuous to realize his little domestic revelation at Roths' Well as a social break. Whatever Mrs. Tucker thought of her forbears, he regarded his father as a genius and his mother as a scholar, and was proud of them. Their son, apparently, was a hopeless chump—too stupid even to find out how he had offended a lady.

As he alighted the magic influence of celebration expanded his heart. Pooley Street, although taking its own time about peace, reckoned itself as good as others, and commandeered the pavements for street teas to voice its loyalty. Being a short street leading to nowhere in particular, it might have got away with the arrangement had it not chosen to erect the festive board at its lower and more roomy end, where it was intersected by one of those little veins between two arteries so essential to traffic's scheme of things.

Tomlins' driver, attempting to cut through, and being held up, had sworn; and others swore. For the table in the cul-de-sac proving too short for the crowd, a free and equal committee man had set authority at defiance and mobilized his neighbors' tables right across the crossing. The police had not been sent, and the buzz of motor vehicles held up, and the curses of their drivers pulling out, mixed continuously with celebration's song.

Cornelius, in all his earnest study of English life and habits, had never dropped on anything so verdant hereto-

fore. He pushed through the body of loafers, determined to win to the front row, from where he could enjoy a full spectacle.

The phalanx, more interested than idle, stood firmly on its right of precedence. Tomlins doubled up at the waist and applied his length like a battering-ram. He doubled his arms and applied his elbows; for the moment he was actively submerged and working forward. All at once cheers broke out. Conscious of missing a trick, he strengthened his efforts. The crowd stood for it good-naturedly, but obstructed progress.

Suddenly it shifted and broke, and Cornelius, braced to make the most of any weakness, as suddenly found himself pitched headlong. Too late he realized the bulldog breed had yielded for a purpose. From the corner pub issued a gigantic tea urn—the symbol of the hour—steaming good cheer. It was borne aloft by buxom volunteers.

As he stumbled Tomlins' eye registered the scene: the urn with its chief supporters, one on either side, a frowsy woman and a stern-visaged man; while a maiden straight as a little pine tree, surely the priestess of ceremonies, brought up their rear.

Beaming acknowledgments of rousing welcome, the coterie moved serenely safe, everybody making way, till out of nowhere he was hurled upon them. A shout, a lunge, a flounder followed, and then a prone Cornelius heard loud guffaws.

As Tomlins scrambled up it was impossible not to present his form in the likeness of a letter A, with feet and head courting the pavement and the silk-lined tails of his morning coat flapping about his ears. The Irishwoman took advantage to make a suggestive motion with the flat of her hand. The business appealed to Pooley Street. It was a fair case of class against class, and they let him have it freely.

He stood to face the music.

A helping arm flashed toward him. "Here!" commanded a silvery voice, and Cornelius, who for the ignominious moment found himself blinded by steam on his spectacles, felt something firmly thrust into his palm. A second later he had removed the offending article, and was wiping them with a dainty little piece of clean linen.

Tomlins was extremely short-sighted, helpless without his glasses, and stood like a man in a fog until they were replaced. Then truly it seemed as if the fog were mounting to his brain.

"Holy cats!" he cried, eying the tables spread before him, heaped with cold roast meats and garnished by milk and butter and eggs. Here was more real food gathered together than he had seen since his arrival, shops included.

"Holy cats! Is this the submerged tenth—the downtrodden producers? It looks like Ali Baba and the forty thieves! I always understood the London working folk were poor."

"Poor!" rippled the pine-tree girl. "When we've all got twice the money we ever earned before, and some of us our unemployment pay, too."

Tomlins had addressed the world at large; he now transferred his astonished gaze from apple-faced youth and gossiping parentage to the last speaker. Things turned head over heels inside him as he catalogued her charms—auburn hair and eyes and milk-white teeth. That was as far as he got. He realized she was laughing—everybody was laughing—but in some subtle way she seemed to be laughing with him instead of at him; just as their remarks had been flung to and fro in face of the chorus, a quick exchange between equals.

"Make yourself useful, bud!" cried somebody. And Cornelius, stooping to the handle of the heavy urn, answered back: "My middle name is Useful."

Ireland hoisted her end, and between them they bore the tea to safety. The pine-tree girl followed, smiling deeply, as though she had a little joke of her own tucked away down inside.

This was the second tankard, the formal opening was over, but a committee man hustled up to do its honors.

"He's an ace," whispered the girl into a large red ear. And Cornelius found himself being pressed to "take a cup of tea with Pooley Street."

Seated beside the Irishwoman on a packing box at somebody's kitchen table, with a ham sandwich in one hand and a thick cup in the other, Cornelius realized himself as near contentment as he had been since setting foot in Plymouth. For the first time England had assimilated him. He felt as much at home as if he were on a Sunday-school treat or a political bun feast; and watched the pine-tree girl as she moved about with tarts and cakes, remembering rapturously that he had not returned her infant handkerchief, but put it in his pocket, where it lay radiating sentiment like a live coal. Stealthily he inserted his fingers, touched it, and blushed; almost as embarrassed as though he had attempted a public caress.

Cornelius had plunged into love at a glance; but he had not yet recognized the symptoms. Now he merely told himself there was something about the girl.

Suddenly she was opposite to him, holding out a plate.

"Have another piece? Come, be maty, no swank. They don't do you like this at Pink's, you know."

"I believe I will, thanks." Tomlins coolly deliberated the size of his slice while searching the reason for her thrust. Was it a bow drawn at a venture, or did she know?

"Got to do my bit first," she laughed.

"Stop, please—a minute!" cried Cornelius, alive to the fear of losing her as she turned away. Blushing at his

temerity, he leaned across. "I would like to—to chip in, and I'm wondering how I can manage it without giving offense—if you could put me wise——"

"Almost any old way," she assured him. "We're not that touchy in Pooley Street. Hang about till six o'clock and blow the boys to a drink. It is rather a whacking big order," she added, glancing at the crowd.

"Not a bit of it—I'm delighted. I was thinking along those lines myself."

He had indeed been wondering how far this performance would go, and what he could do to lengthen it. Her mention of opening time looked like steady business—perhaps they would be here all evening. And had she not in a sort of way, a mild way of course, but still in a way, personally invited him to remain? For a moment elation soared, then flopped earthward as her hidden amusement freshly impinged on his senses.

"What in heaven is the girl laughing at? My dude's clothes? Lots of fellows are taller; why does she take me for a human joke?" he asked angrily.

Reading that barometer of moods, his face, she all at once relented and sat down opposite, much to her garrulous friend's delight.

"Do ye hear now—let me be pouring. It's everybody's servant she is this day. Shure the creature."

Cornelius assisted the fat woman, and handed their cups to be refilled.

"The kind that mother used to make," he said, sniffing the fragrant brew. "Some tea!"

"Faith, it is so. I made it meself according to her direction: 'Make it strong,' she'd say. 'For the love of God, a good cup of stimulant—'tis a glorious thing!' And it's many the day I've made it in the dark dead of night after an air raid, when we'd all been shivering an hour, in our shifts, in the corner of a stone hall, groaning

the hearts out of ourselves with misery."

Cornelius pricked up his ears. "Tell me. Have you personally experienced an air raid?"

Surprisingly the humorist went into shrieks of laughter.

"Lord o' mercy! Listen to the gossling! Have I experienced an air raid? Have I experienced four mortal years of air raids on every moonlight night; and me poor mother betweenwhiles, the old soul, weeping for me to go back to the safety of Ballyhone. But shure the minute this one's over there's no need to be worrying about nothing till the next one—that's what I was telling her. Glory be! It's second nature to me now, it is indeed, to rise at the screech of doomsday and the racket of destruction, wrap myself in a feather duster or any old thing, and go careering down the stairs through pitch blackness."

Tomlins' face wore the expression of one who has struck a rich vein. "Well, now, this is right interesting! I've been several months in London and never heard anybody mention an air raid—that is, not to enlarge on it."

Her reminiscences were to Cornelius like a red rag flirited at a bull.

"You confounded British clam up so," he complained. "We outsiders can't get a look in to see what it really was worth. As far as I dope out now, a street block of dwelling houses, here and there, would be blown to kingdom come every starry night, and by dawn the police mobilized, cleaned up the mess, and nothing more was said about it. New York believed for ever so long the Zeps were a fizzle. London hasn't a scar. You ignore the facts in polite conversation like a family disgrace."

"Glory be to God! Is it from New York ye are? Shure 'tis the pigs in London have the American accent these days!"

"Now you're torking!" said a neighbor.

Cornelius regarded this turn of the conversation open-mouthed.

"No offense meant," cried a voice from behind.

"Imported meat, ye idgit! Carn't yer take off yer hat to a joke when yer sees one?" The company laughed.

Somebody began making a speech at the end of the cul-de-sac, and most of the loafers moved up, only scattered groups lingered. Tomlins looked across the table.

The pine-tree girl had risen to her feet. A great, deep flush of anger overspread her lovely face. Her eyes glared balefully. Tomlins' confusion gave way to surprise. Then it dawned on him the girl was not minding him at all. Her passion and horror centered on a thing beyond—over his shoulder. He whirled in time to witness the catastrophe.

Pooley Street had wished to stop the world for her convenience, and Pooley Street had got it in the neck!

A man with a three-ton motor truck turned into the little vein of a cross current. He was well down the road before he saw their temporary barricade. That jolly sight incensed him. Perhaps he was a decent soul goaded to madness by pettiest trifles; perhaps a natural-born villain, or a tank chauffeur who stops at nothing. There being no signs up to the country, traffic was legally open, and vehicles had a right to go through.

The driver saw his chance of paying off old scores and took it. A trumpet, as of the last judgment, blared from under his inhuman touch. Sardonically on his elevated throne, he watched the people scatter, riding the whirlwind which brutally bore down upon them. He grinned. He kicked the accelerator in fiendish glee. His unwieldy beast answered her summons, and like a rhinoceros rose to the charge. A crash,

the snapping of flimsy boards, the fall and crunch of crockery, a prolonged howl from merry-makers taken unawares, shrieks of escaping individuals, lamentations, curses, wailing children, and then a most historic sound—the tread of heavy boots on cobblestones—as a wild mob gave chase.

In no playful mood they closed upon the monster's tracks, dripping with tea and whitened by scattered bits of china. Owners of ruined tables rushed the incline, only to see their quarry swallowed in the broad thoroughfare.

Vengeful, the leaderless rabble stormed till the cry, "A slop!" reminded them of civic rights, and the vanguard doubled on its tracks. Spectators shuffled off; committee men hid; tenants returned to Pooley Street uttering imprecations. Already a "bobby" was on the spot, laying down the law in sympathetic but unmistakable terms; restraining Katie, the Irish cook, with one iron hand and holding a badly scared, unclaimed urchin with the other.

Two men wearing khaki, broad hats, and feathers joked mercilessly, cheering the enemy.

"Not so much of your larfin'. See?" admonished a husky native.

"Go an' boil your fat 'ead!"

"Give 'im a blighty one!"

A fist shot out. Peace took unto herself wings. The friends of rival parties rallied round.

Cornelius decided this was no place for a young woman. The pine-tree girl stood straight and bold beside him, trembling in impotent rage. She had shaken off his protecting arm, crying:

"What a damned crime! It's only an idiot fluke that a child wasn't killed!"

From the end of the table they had seen what the crowd missed. A boy petrified by fear, poised with his bun in hand, his gaze held by the oncoming truck, had stumbled, fallen, recovered himself by a convulsive movement, and rolled at last clear of the

wheels. The girl was more shaken than he. Her anger flooded and ebbed. Tears suffused her eyes. Cornelius, sensing hysterics, linked his arm under her elbow in the American fashion.

"I have a taxi round the corner."

She flashed at him: "Is that a threat or a promise?" hesitated, and smiled with a sob.

"Come," he said.

Once in the cab, her feelings suffered a sudden revulsion. She lay back on the cushions, limp with laughter, and Cornelius, relieved to see hysteria take such an amiable course, grinned sympathetically.

Recalled from the whirl of events by a plunging cab, she gathered the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral into her consciousness and began to question:

"As the poet chappies put it: Whither away?"

"Oh! I get you. This fellow picked me up at Pink's, so I suppose he is heading there. After the fleshpots of Pooley Street, would you—could I persuade you—"

He had almost committed the indiscretion of asking a strange woman to dinner, when a look in her eyes—doubtless the inherent virtue of the working girl—stopped him short.

"If you will kindly drop me at Staple Inn, I shall be much obliged."

Her starchiness reminded him most unpleasantly of Roselle's cold, but still beautiful shoulder, as presented in his theater box the evening before. So, cursing himself for the implied impertinence, he gave the order and turned to his companion earnestly crestfallen.

"Staple Inn! Is that one of London's temperance hotels recommended for ladies? I've never heard of it before. You must excuse my curiosity—I'm awfully interested in London; making a kind of study of the place from day to day. This is my first trip over here, and I want to get everything out of it I can. Honest Injun! That's

all I mean. That is why I was so keen on the tea this afternoon. People and customs are most interesting of all, but they are harder to get at. I've met some swells, of course, but they are like seeing the Houses of Parliament or the National Gallery—always on show. It is out-of-the-way corners one enjoys best."

His valiant struggle to emerge alive from under the load of propriety she had dumped on him amused the girl.

"Staple Inn is a corner," she said tentatively; and then, deciding to forgive him: "I like it after excitement—and I like you also—you're not a bad sort. You've sense enough to fizzle a drive when you see it's in the wrong direction. The direction was my fault; I thought it fun to baffle your understanding with gibberish. It was fun, too—you looked funny." A dimple came and went from her cheek. "I may do it again any time, but in this lucid interval I warn you—look out for bunkers."

He noted the light of that reserve joke still in her merry eyes, and pondered. Where could he have met this girl who spoke with the ease of old acquaintance? He said nothing.

"It's no use losing each other in the rough if a word of explanation puts us on top," she added nervously.

Cornelius took this as a passport to friendship. "Thank you," he said, offering his hand. "My name is Tom-lins—Pink's hotel and Sue Luck City. I appreciate your confidence. Only one woman ever showed so much confidence in me before."

He paused with twinkling eyes, weighing the advisability of further explanation, and shook his head, only remarking: "She didn't find me the king of the brigands, either."

At which the girl laughed as understandingly as if he had told her the whole tale. It seemed odd.

She, on her part, was aware of never

having felt so much at home with a man's moods. But all she said was:

"Right! Here we are."

The taxi drew up in front of a row of old white houses crashing picturesquely into that modern hideousness, Holborn. Their timbered walls, overhanging stories, gables, and air of ancient tradition fascinated Cornelius; but more it surprised and delighted him that she, a working girl, should have cared to come here. He had reckoned the modern Londoner too swift to snatch a moment for worshiping historic charms, yet surely this damsel was modernity incarnate.

The American removed his hat and stood bareheaded in the square. Whether at the dictate of some unique national custom, as they take off their hats in elevators, or out of respect to her or the place, his guide did not know; but she knew she liked it. "Topping," she thought. "An unconscious tribute—part of his innate decency." She watched him as he stood, silently letting the atmosphere sink in.

"Pink curtains," Cornelius mused, eying the windows. "Do you mean to say people *live* here? Gee! Wouldn't I love to live here! Wouldn't I like a front door like that one under the arch!"

"This isn't the real thingummy!" she cried, and, slipping her arm into his, turned him about and led him through the second passage.

The little garden burst upon him surprising as an oasis in a desert of stone. He could only stand and stare at its flowers and fountain snuggled on the heart of London, drenched with evening light. His joy voiced itself:

"How my mother would have loved this!"

The girl caught him blinking hard behind his glasses, and felt like an intruder.

"Was your mother fond of corners, too, Mr. Tomlins?"

"Frightfully. She was a schoolma'am from Boston and sacrificed herself living in the West. She had a wonderful mind. It's from her I get my appreciation of poetry—and all. Her dearest dream was to visit Paris and London. But that was before my father struck it rich. At first she hadn't the money, and afterward, when he went into politics, he couldn't spare it, and then she hadn't the strength. But she always said to me: 'You'll go, son, and see it for us both.'"

Cornelius took off his spectacles to wipe them.

His companion turned away quickly, swallowing a shameful lump. Tension relieved itself by action. Her nimble fingers hovered under the lock and the gate swung open. They entered almost solemnly and silent in the spell.

A single evening star brightened the basin of the fountain.

Seriousness dropped from their mood as utterly as Roselle had faded out of Tomlins' mind. Expanding to real sympathy, Cornelius appeared at his very best. "Tell me about yourself," he said eagerly.

"I'd do it like a shot if there was anything interesting to tell; but there's not now. In the army these last few years one has had a vocation and all that—hot stuff for the duration of the war, don't you know. It is a heavy let down afterward. I have learned I'm a fooling idiot in civil life. About once a week I come a cropper on my job, upset the apple cart and fail to gather in the doubloons."

Cornelius looked puzzled.

"You don't take work seriously, I gather."

"Oh, yes, I do. Indeed I do. I'm drenched in gravity at the start; but at the finish I'm an 'also ran.' When the clock strikes the Pooh-bah comes and tells me to tear myself away."

She emitted a sound between a laugh and a sigh, and smiled like a minx.

"I'm not grouching, old thing. It's this way. Poor dad was war ruined; had to sell our little homestead lock, stock, and barrel. He is too English to accommodate himself—not much use at anything new now—and my sister is hardly the sort to make things hum, either. The only members of the family who have any cash are a spinster aunt and a butler, and the old family-retainer business seems a bit dormant these days." She pulled up short, then plunged ahead.

"Anyway, it wouldn't be sporting to live on them, and, between you and me, I rather enjoy roaming the limitless space of commercial ambition. Now I'm engaged on night work, and have my afternoons off."

Cornelius noted none of her inconsistencies. The better half of his mind occupied itself in research, trying to decide amid gathering darkness whether or not the speaker's nose, tip-tilted ever so little, and whence the haunting reminiscence of her voice.

"I'd like to help along—I have an idea, too—but I don't want to go butting in on your affairs. I intend to keep the contract we made outside there. So if—if you do not like what I am going to say, give me the high sign and I'll—'foozle' again."

"Carry on."

"I came to London with three objects—business, pleasure, and duty. I've been studying England, going about with a Baedeker or a professional guide whenever the chance offered; but it's pretty dry. I have found more of the spirit of the world I'm seeking here this afternoon than in all the rest of my outings put together, and it makes me wonder if I haven't been setting about it in the wrong way."

His tone changed. He grew diffident. "I was thinking if we couldn't frame up something together, a regular arrangement, formal hours—could you,

would you give me some of your afternoons and show me corners?"

The girl considered. Tomlins waited, silent.

"It's a ripe scheme," she said at last, "and seems to point the way to solvency—that fraputuous word!"

"Done!" cried Cornelius. "Put it here."

Cornelius was boyishly enthusiastic from the start.

"Let us get off the mark quickly," he begged. "Will it be all right to plan to commence to-morrow?"

"Right as rain."

"Hurrah! Then we will go to Hampton Court if it's fine. I have never been in a maze in my life, and I want to learn punting—with the big stick, you know. When the Boneses took me up the river in June everybody was doing it. It looks mighty foolish for a man of my size! I reckon we'll need a whole day to get in the castle and all."

He looked at her questioningly. She shook her head.

"Nothing doing? Well, have it your own way. We will cut the program. But I hope you can stretch the morning so that we lunch there. If we run out by automobile—motor. Business, remember—it's a straight business proposition," he added hastily, seeing objection hover in her eyes.

The girl still hesitated.

"What fair renown, what honor, what repute Can come to you from starving this poor brute?"

Cornelius asked in his sternest legal manner, twinkling behind his spectacles.

"I'd jolly well like to," she said, "and it's all in the day's work, isn't it? Shall we meet here at noon to-morrow?"

Tomlins walked across the pavement, hailed a taxi, and handed her in. A brown hand waved at the window, the cab vanished, and then reality crashed down upon him. He had forgotten to inquire her name.

TO BE CONTINUED.



Tubby

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs In Pigs"

IT was February, I think, when "Bobby" came to my studio, looking as blue as possible. I knew by the way he threw himself on my long couch that something was wrong, for he did it with an air of "Here goes nothing and nobody cares!"

"What ho, youngster!" I hailed him. "Doris cruel again? Has she been telling you your ties does not match your eyes?"

"Don't tease me, uncle Dod," he begged. "It's worse than that—I mean, it isn't anything silly. Don't you know? Hasn't she told you?"

I am not his uncle Dod. I am Doris' uncle Dod, but Bobby—and plenty of other young fellows have come to call me uncle Dod because Doris does. I suppose they feel it draws Doris closer somehow.

I am a respectable, middle-aged painter—portraits of a sort—and my studio does make a nice background for Doris. That is one reason she herds all her young men into it for tea, I imagine, although she claims she flutters around the place because she loves me and I am her dear, old Dod uncle. I love her, at any rate, but I confess that Doris is intelligent enough to be aware that the Gobelin tapestries make a remarkably fetching setting for an eighteen-year-old behind a tea urn. I think she knows the callow young fellows love the atmosphere, too. It is classy, as they say, to be able to mention casually that they have just been having a jag of tea and a couple of fags up in old Doddy's studio.

They think I am a queer old billy goat, I dare say, to have such a spiffy

niece. Spiffy is not my word; Doris put it into my vocabulary. She says I have such spiffy tea, and it is such a spiffy day, and isn't her new gown spiffy; and the poor, half-baked word is whirled around and used so continuously I am sure it will be dead and buried in less than a year.

Bobby is, I think, the nicest of the boys Doris has towed into my studio. I'd call him spiffy, if I dared. He is a handsome young rascal, and clean. He is one of the few callows I am glad to have flock up here in my studio when Doris is not around to absorb their freshman chatter. Quite frequently Bobby can talk like a human.

In one way and another, as two men can, Bobby and I have come to understand that I like him and that he likes me, and that I would not be at all heart-broken if he married Doris, with ring and book and bell. I soon knew how it was with Bobby. When a young fellow sits on your chairs for three-hour stretches, day after day, with elegant works of art, by yours truly, spat-tered about the walls by dozens, ready to be talked about, and the young fellow talks of nothing but Doris, you begin to think he is fond of Doris. It was rather unanimously understood between Bobby and me that if everything turned out all right with Bobby and Doris, it would be all right. He put it that way one day when he grasped my hand—I shifted my brush to the left hand to do the grasping—and said, fervently:

"All right, then, uncle Dod, if it's all right, it will be all right."

So now, when he plumped down like

a lost soul, I knew the all right was not all right. To use Doris' word, his love affair was evidently not at all spiffy. It was spoofy, if that is the proper word.

"Hasn't she told me what, Bobby?" I asked.

"Tubby," he said broken-heartedly.

"What!" I cried. "Not that——"

"Fatty? Yes," said poor Bobby.

I put down my paint things.

"You don't mean anything really serious?"

"Yes. Engaged," Bobby said. "Ring on her finger. I suppose she let him kiss her. It's awful, isn't it? I wouldn't care if he was a real fellow. You know that, uncle Dod. All I want is for Doris to be happy——"

"Oh, rats!" I said disgustedly. "Nothing of the sort. What do we care whether she is happy or—I mean, you don't want to try to pull any hypocritical stuff like that. You want her because you want her. You don't want her to marry any one but you. If you're just mooning around this studio to tell me you want her to marry any——"

"I'll take it back," the poor boy said. "Don't knock me now, uncle Dod, please. I'm down and out; down and out *hard*, I tell you!"

"Tubby!" I said again. "Of all the—if there could be one man I didn't like——"

"It is awful, isn't it," said poor Bobby. "And to think we can't do anything!"

"Who says that?" I demanded. "A nice state of affairs if my niece will not listen to——"

"Please! I wouldn't," said Bobby. "Haven't you heard that it makes them more—more faithful and true, if you attack the object of their—however ill advised—if you may call it affection, although what she can see in a beast like Tubby, even if I am only jealous, but I try not to be——"

"Maudlin!" I said. "Absolutely

maudlin! And don't believe such nonsense. I will talk to Doris plainly. I will speak openly. I will tell her exactly what I think of that Tubby. That tub of lard," I added scornfully.

I did speak plainly and openly to Doris, and I did tell her what I thought of her "Tubby." I think Bobby was right. I urged her to give the fat little wretch his ring again and have no more to do with him, and she said, very well, she would not bring him to my detested studio again, if that was how I felt, and I could be sure *she* would never put foot in it evermore!

I couldn't have that, you know. She so evidently meant it. It is surprising how decided these flittery, fluttery, young females can be. Just when I thought she was going to brain me with a couple of big crystal tears, I stepped an inch to one side, metaphorically speaking, and said perhaps I was mistaken. Then I stepped another inch to one side and said I should have thought before speaking; that the thought of losing her from my life had upset me. And so on.

I believe they call it side-stepping in this modern jargon. If so, I side-stepped entirely around the circle and landed on quite the other side of Doris, holding her hand and all but saying, "Bless you my children."

I found her parents shockingly callous to the Tubby menace. "And, anyway, Doddy," her mother said, "what can we do if she wants him?"

Her father said only one thing that I could construe as placing him on my side: "He'll be as fat as an apple by the time he is thirty."

"He is as fat as that now," I said.

I went back to my studio rather downcast, and all I could say to Bobby when he came up was "The cigarettes are on the other table." That he understood was indicated by his words.

"No man that is a man commits suicide," he said. "He lives and hopes!"

Of course, he did not visit me often when Doris began towing the Tubby fellow into my studio. Bobby could not pretend to be placid. He kept away, coming only in the morning, when there was little chance of Doris appearing. It was one of these mornings that he came up and caught me at work, my smock on and my brushes in my fist.

"Oh, now! uncle Dod!" he exclaimed.

I confess that I was giving just a touch to an oil sketch of Tubby, and that he had caught me doing it. Doris had begged so. I had done Doris—twenty poses at least—and nearly all the young callows in her train; rough oil sketches that were good practice for me, trying to catch the likeness in a few strokes, and cure myself of my always dangerous desire to overpaint and get too far from my Henri ideal. I had done Bobby long since.

"Don't worry about this," I told him.

I really had not cared to do the obnoxious Tubby, but, as I said, Doris had begged it, and I was hoping for something to turn up. I did not know what might turn up, but I knew it was best for me to be very wise and keep on the best of terms with Doris.

I did not like the Tubby boy at all. I liked him less and less each time I saw him.

"Whatever do you see in him, Doris?" I asked.

"He's so dear!" she said. "He's so good natured and kind, uncle Dod."

I asked her father how he liked the Tubby lad by this time.

"He as an excellent appetite," he said. "He isn't one of these complaining dyspeptics."

When I had pretty well completed Tubby's portrait Doris studied it one day.

"It's wonderful, uncle Dod!" she told me. "It is just like dear Tubby. I think it is one of the best things you've done, don't you?"

I hated to acknowledge it, but it was true. It was one of the best things I had done.

"It is so sweet and good-natured," Doris said.

"You catch that in it, do you?" I asked, rather pleased.

"Perfectly. It's a spiffy likeness. I love you for it."

She kissed me because it was such a spiffy likeness.

When Bobby came up the next morning I put Tubby on the display easel, in the best light the studio afforded, and said nothing. He studied it, resentfully at first, and then, I was sure, with admiration for my paint prowess.

"It's rather wonderful, you know," he said reluctantly. "You've got him so—so thoroughly. His soul, if that's the way to say it."

"You catch that in it, do you?" I asked.

"Oh, absolutely!" Bobby said. "It's pig, isn't it?"

"Big?" I said, misunderstanding him.

"Pig was what I said," Bobby answered. "A pig soul."

I stood back and looked at the portrait. I had not thought of the spirit behind the flesh I had been counterfeiting. Sometimes one is lucky and gets the spirit that lies back of the flesh, and sometime's not. As I looked, I saw that Bobby was right; I had caught the spirit—the soul, as Bobby called it—and it was the veritable soul of a pretty, plump, little pig; I have seen them at church fairs, raffled off, with blue bows on their necks.

"And I never knew a woman yet," I said, "who did not coo admiringly over a plump, pink, little suckling pig."

"They grow into disgusting hogs just the same," said Bobby.

"The pig is father to the hog!" I misquoted Wordsworth.

"That's what I mean," Bobby said.

I laughed and approached the portrait. I touched the thing here and

there, and, with a couple of shadows under the eyes and around the mouth and under the plump chin, I aged Tubby twenty years. He was the same Tubby but he was not a pretty, little pink pig any longer. His small eyes were too piggy, his small nose, too—let us say piggy again.

"That's why," said Bobby most seriously. "You can see it perfectly now, can't you, uncle Dod? The kind that put both feet in the trough."

I made a circle of Tubby's nose and put two dots on it and laughed. I put two white ears on him, and laughed again. Then I heard a shocked cry behind me and turned. Doris was standing there.

"Cruel!" she cried. "Cruel! It's horrid of you! It's mean of you—*mean!*"

She turned on Bobby furiously.

"And you—laughing?" she cried. "I wouldn't be so low! I wouldn't be so——"

"I was *not* laughing, Miss Doris," said poor Bobby, trembling and trying to be haughty and hurt at once.

"You were!" she declared. Oh, she was raging! "Both of you. I heard you. And you pretend to be my friends. And you get together and laugh——"

She turned to the portrait again.

"It's not so! It's not a bit like him," she cried. "He—oh! I'll never, *never* come into this studio again!"

But she did. I put the picture of Tubby against the wall, back of the green baize curtain. It was a week later when Doris came in, very cold and very haughty, and also very spiffy in a soft, brown fur. She might have been some proud queen visiting some poor worm of a fence painter.

"I have come for the portrait, if you please," she said.

"Oh, Doris!" I said, "I'm sorry! I haven't made it right again yet. If I had thought you wanted it——"

"I have come for it, please," she said coldly.

I got out the accursed thing. I dragged it from behind the green baize curtain.

"Let me see it, please," she said, still haughtily aloof and grand ladylike.

I put the portrait on the easel humbly. She sat and studied it, tapping her little foot.

"It is not true!" she said. "He is not like that. It—it is a falsehood."

"Yes, yes!" I said. "Just some of an old fool's fun."

"You thought you would make me sick of him," she accused. "You and your Bobby thought you would make me think he was like that. But he's not! He's *not!*"

"Of course not," I said. "Not at all. But you don't want the portrait as it is, Doris. Let me make it right. Do that for your uncle Dod, won't you?"

"Well——" she said, relenting a little.

I took the hoggishness off the thing after she had gone. I worked on it honestly and hard. I made it Tubby again, as Tubby was. It was a day or two later that she came up. She knew the paint must dry. She was studiously to that extent. When I set the portrait on the easel, she looked at it long, before she looked at me. When she did look at me, her eyes still accused me.

"And you said you would make it right, uncle Dod," she said rather sorrowfully. "I thought I could trust you, if I could trust any one. I thought you would——"

"But, my dear child!" I exclaimed, "I have! I have painted out all—all that. This is not tampered with. This is a portrait—his portrait. And it is a good portrait."

She burst into tears right there before my eyes.

"It's not so? It's not true!" she sobbed.

I tried to comfort her. I tried to put my arms around her, comforting—

uncle style, but she pushed me away, and rushed out of the studio, dabbing at her eyes with a bit of lace.

I whistled, a long, low whistle, and looked at the portrait. I shook my head over it, too. There wasn't anything I could do to it—not in honesty. It *was* Tubby. I could not help that. I could not help it if he had the soul of a pig and the soul showed through the paint.

Doris did not return to the studio for a week and I was worried. I met her father and asked if anything was wrong, but he said nothing was wrong. Tubby came to the house as usual.

"No break?" I asked.

"She's kinder to him than ever," her male parent said. "It gags me a little sometimes, but we fathers have to stand our share of that mushiness. I remember when I——"

That did not interest me. What did interest me was that, at the end of the week, Doris came to the studio, coming in quietly, almost like a meek and humble suppliant.

"Please, uncle Dod," she said, "may I see Tubby's picture again?"

I put it on the easel for her and turned it so that it got the best north light, and took my hat and went out, leaving her alone with it. I do not know how long she sat before it. When I went back to the studio, after I had had my luncheon, she was gone, and the portrait of Tubby stood where I had

left it. I put it behind the green baize curtain again, looking at it only once. He did look like a pig!

The next morning I telephoned Bobby a "What ho!" which made him cheer lustily and come running to the studio.

"You think—do you think——" he cried, too excited to talk plainly.

"I do think, Bobby," I told him.

My reason for thinking that Bobby had a good fighting chance again was this: When Doris left the studio, and I came back and found her gone, and Tubby's portrait still there, I wondered things. I wondered all the afternoon and, after my dinner that evening, I went around to my sister's apartment. I found my brother-in-law sitting in his easy-chair smoking his after-dinner cigar, but no Tubby and no Doris and no mother of Doris.

"Ned," I said, "I've come up to talk with Doris. You don't mind, do you?"

"No," he said, "I don't mind, Doddy, only you can't. Not to-night. Doris is——"

"Not ill?" I asked, worried.

"No, not ill," her father said. "Sick, I think, is the word for it. Queer beings, girls are. She seemed all right up to the very moment when she came to the dinner table, but the moment I put my carving knife into the roast of pork she uttered a moan and——"

"Fainted?" I suggested.

"No," said her father, "fled."

TO A YOUNG GIRL

BECAUSE you are fair I take your life from you,
Draw out your thoughts and smiles with greedy skill;
Filch slyly from you hours, as robbers do
The shining coins from some unguarded till.

Child! See your danger! Do not trust with blind
And generous friendliness your deadliest foe,
Who steals your passing youth. But you are kind
And prodigal. I cannot let you go!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

Old Wine in New Bottles

By Dora Langlois

Author of "The Fault and the Fee,"
"Mate in Two Moves," etc.



AFTER a long and arduous courtship Trevor Huntley had just asked "the most wonderful girl" to marry him. He gathered from what she did not say that he was accepted. There followed an interlude of the usual sort, then they stood apart, looking at each other, trying to realize what had happened.

"No, not again," Iris Denzill protested with hands outstretched, the palms against his breast. "Not until we are sure we really understand each other."

"Oh, come! You're not going to take anything back," he cried. "You know you've promised to marry me."

"Yes, Trevor, on conditions."

Trevor Huntley began to make the stereotyped protestations, but struck by something in her tone paused, and concluded lamely, "Oh, well, these alarming conditions! I suppose I had better hear them."

"I am glad you said that," she responded, laughing. "If you had done what you were going to do, I should have known you only meant to keep me good and docile, and have things your own way in the end."

"Really it wasn't as bad as all that," he assured her. "But never mind! What is it I've got to eschew? Gently. I'll not only promise, but perform. By the way, perhaps we are

going to have a tiff; but we are absolutely engaged. Remember that!" He spoke with an easy confidence he was far from feeling, for he had not forgotten that this wonder girl, slim as a young birch, with eyes that were deep pools, was one accustomed to form her own views on any subject, and hold firmly to them, too.

"No, you must leave yourself quite free, Trevor," she insisted. "The sum and substance of the whole thing is this—I've known so many failures in marriage that I have come to believe that love—love as between man and woman—is not naturally of itself durable; that it was not framed to stand, and as a matter of fact does not stand the ordinary wear and tear of everyday life. And so when I marry, I mean, if I marry, I shall not live with my husband."

"Not? Then isn't that very much like being permanently in the engaged state?" he stammered in astonishment. "What is the idea? May I have it explained to me?"

"The idea," she answered, her pretty brows contracted in the effort of explaining, "is very much what you suggest; to make the engaged state, the condition called 'being in love with each other,' as permanent as possible."

"And you are convinced that living with you would cure me of being in

love with you? I say, that's a frightful revelation!"

"Living together cures the average couple very completely, Trevor, and it's quite possible it might cure us."

"At any rate you're strictly impartial! I see: we are *both* persons not fit to live with."

"Trevor, if you're not able to treat this seriously I don't think I can go on. It's not a joke!"

"I'm beginning to see that," he admitted ruefully. "I was only hoping it might be! By the way, you haven't formed the idea, have you, that man is necessarily an unfaithful animal?"

"I haven't found in the college curriculum that nature ever intended him to be anything else," she replied. "But I accept things as they are, and I'm not worrying over that point. The ideal man's own brain has conceived has its influence, if he and his partner give themselves a chance."

"That is satisfactory as far as it goes," he mumbled. "I suppose I mustn't ask for any larger faith."

"Oh, I go even farther," she added. "I don't think that man is always, or even often, the partner who first ceases to care; but I fancy he is almost invariably the one who gives the other partner cause to change. Trevor, I could never live so near a man that I became just the woman he was sure of—so sure that she hears it in every tone of his voice when he gives her the benefit of all the impatience he has had to curb in office hours."

"You seem to have decided that I am a surly brute," he remarked dryly. They were on the verge now of something more than the tiff he had foreseen, but her next words disarmed him.

"There *are* risks of that sort in marriage," she said earnestly, "and the inevitable risk is quite enough to face. Some girls can close their eyes to everything; but I think you can guess why I am not able to do so."

He did more than guess, he knew. It was indeed common knowledge that her father was a man of violent, cynical temper, that her mother had died a dejected, nerve-racked woman, that the eldest son had gone utterly to the bad, while her other brother was a man for whom men had no use, full of the small trickeries learned in an environment of fear.

"One must not make the mistake of regarding exceptional cases as typical," he said hastily. "And you'll admit that it's a shock to—well, to connect the idea of being in love with being seen yourself, so clearly as that sort of possibility."

"Ah! but I don't see you clearly," she insisted. "That's the difficulty! I know I can't, and all because of a luminous cloud you have managed to lead me into."

"After that," he cried, his breath catching with the leap of his pulses, "after that wonderful admission, I should be less than a man if I didn't take care of the cloud for you! Come into it wholly, sweetheart, and let's forget all this."

"No," she protested, evading him desperately, "I'm afraid; I shall always be afraid, unless I can get you to listen and agree."

He stood for a moment, wounded, balked, impatient, his arms empty of her; then he managed to command himself. He was no longer inclined to laugh; his hope was that in discussion she might see her case break down.

"Very well," he said, putting her into a chair, and taking his place opposite her, half seated on the table, "suppose you try to tell me as plainly as possible what it is you propose. Then we can decide. Broadly stated, I gather that you are prepared to marry me, but not to live under the same roof with me. Do you mean a secret marriage—or anything of that sort?"

"Oh, no, no secrecy! I'm afraid that

I want this to be pioneer work, Trevor, not merely a bid for our own happiness."

"Then you do mean wedding bells, and orange blossoms——"

"Yes, everything as orthodox as usual."

"A honeymoon is usual, so I presume it's orthodox! Of course as we pledge ourselves for life that doesn't end matters—or does it?"

"No; the suggestion is that you retain your bachelor quarters, while I have a home of my own."

"Am I allowed to provide it? I ask because I know you have property of your own."

"Certainly, you provide it! You see if the husband did not do so, the thing could not become possible for the majority of couples—anyhow, I know you would hate it if you didn't."

"I'm glad you recognize that," he commented a trifle dryly. "In the home you have projected will the husband be welcomed as a sort of super-guest?"

"Welcomed of course, but not expected to eat seven breakfasts a week there, or to present himself on the doorstep just half an hour after office hours. In any case he retains his liberty of action."

"Including permission to be detained late at the office without explanation?"

"Certainly without explanation! Explanations are always unnecessary, except when they're impossible." Her tone was cool, but her lover noted, not without secret joy, the flush which accompanied the words.

"I subscribe to your intentions," he said with diplomatic haste. "Neither party hampered in his or her pursuits and friendships! As his wife's guest the man refrains from bringing his business temper, his tired grouch into the house——"

"And as his hostess, she is less likely to inflict him with the nerves induced

by troublesome servants and fractious babies."

"Are there any babies?" he asked in some surprise. "I thought perhaps they were outside the scope of the contract. It may surprise you, but there are men who happen to like their own babies, and find themselves robust enough to support their being fractious occasionally. Have you remembered that some babies become boys? Do they get nothing but mothering? The average man is rather keen about his sons. Still I must admit you have considered the scheme carefully. There's only one thing you seem to have forgotten. What will my friends say of me if I agree to adopt your plan?"

"Does it matter what they say?" she asked with curling lip.

"I'm afraid it does," he answered. "You see a properly constituted man objects to have his relations with his wife discussed at all. Look here, sweetheart! I know you've had a bad experience; I can understand your wanting to be a pioneer; but even pioneers are sometimes wrong, and anyhow the prophet of to-morrow is always the martyr of to-day——"

"Trevor, that's blank materialism!"

"Well, it's for your sake! A man could live that kind of life quite comfortably. Ask yourself! In a country like England where the wrong kind of hat at college damns a schoolboy for life, is there likely to be pardon for anything 'queer' or 'weird' in the union of a man and woman? There *must* be something wrong about your scheme, dearest, it inverts everything! This is *your* proposal of marriage—for I'm hanged if it's mine! And I'm left to tell a woman whether I'll accept her or refuse her! What kind of position is that? Give it up! Give it up, sweetheart, for my sake!"

He was very vital, very ardent, entirely at his best as he made his appeal; but for all that it was at this point that

he made his great mistake. Iris knew now that he was going to refuse what she asked. She had retreated from him till she could retreat no further. He had caught her at last, and was restraining her by force, trying to soften the effect of his words in the only way he knew, counting on the feeling for him which she had admitted; expecting her to sacrifice her principles for his caresses. Perhaps the sudden knowledge that she was capable of surrender when his hands touched her and his presence enveloped her, added fuel to the fire, for she was out of his arms in an instant, angry, outraged, flaming with wrath.

"You brute!" she cried. "How dare you? You have no more right to touch me than the first man in the street."

"Oh, yes, I have," he countered. "I've a right to use every argument; and how much I love you is the best of them all."

"Love?" she retorted. The curl of her lip supplied the words she left unsaid, the old indictment against man to which there is no answer.

"Yes, love!" he insisted, stung to anger at last. "And a very good sort of love, too, if you knew as much as you think you do."

"It's very evident I don't know anything," she replied. "I thought that a man's love would help him to face the mere unpleasantness of being talked about."

"No, you wouldn't find a man to do it—some conceited crank perhaps, who would not care what was said, so long as he got himself talked about."

"I think we are beating the air," she said coldly. "Hadn't you better go? We seem to agree on one point, for I am beginning to think I shall never find a man."

He advanced upon her, his face working with stark jealousy. "So the conditions have been offered before," he said. "This isn't the first time?"

She turned upon him with a glance like a darting rapier, then suddenly became very still and white. "I think I must leave you to answer that question for yourself," she said.

"Yes, I think I can do that," he replied, his eyes searching her face; "the answer is that this is the first time, as it will be the last. So I'm glad I kissed you against your will, as it settles the point for the future. I don't know anything else, except that I love you, and I'm not going to marry you. I'm going to wait."

"Please go!" she said and her hand moved mechanically to the bell.

"I am going to wait," he continued steadily, "till you find out whether you love me, or whether I'm only the subject for an experiment you want to see working, and can't work out alone. Good-by for the the present."

She rang the bell with an impatient gesture. He stooped and caught her face between his palms, forcing her to look into his eyes.

"You are a damn, ridiculous, little crank!" he said. "And I love you to distraction. Think it over."

The next minute he was gone.

They both had time to think of many things during the months that followed. Huntley personally discovered that there were plenty of girls in the world who would make suitable wives; the only drawback was that he could not concentrate on them, singly or collectively for five minutes at a time. The woman denied him might, probably would, exasperate him to the verge of patience, pile up the debt of endurance, but when she paid she would pay in full. He would have his moments; she could make him utterly happy.

Almost a year had passed when at last he received a dinner invitation. It was not one of the small, intimate affairs to which he had once been bidden, just a crowd, and of course, he did not take Iris in; but later in the evening, while

a professional comedian was rendering vocal impertinences at the piano, she gave him his opportunity.

"I must tell you, Trevor," she whispered hurriedly, "that it was my aunt who found your name on our list and sent your invitation."

"That's not an encouraging opening," he replied, "but I've waited a long time. Iris, will you marry me?"

"I cannot," she said in a low voice.

"Nothing has changed then?"

"Something perhaps—possibly my feelings about it. But, Trevor, I didn't tell you because I was angry. My resolve was a promise to my mother that I would never begin married life except in that way. It's a matter of conscience!"

"No use asking a woman to tamper with that, and then expecting happiness," he answered ruefully.

"No use at all! In any case I should be an unsatisfactory wife I'm afraid—quite impossible."

"Unsatisfactory, no—impossible—perhaps! I must know something before I can decide that point. What is life going to be to you, Iris, if we don't come together? Try to answer me frankly; I have my reasons."

"It will not be happy."

"Ah! I don't mean a gentle unhappiness, a placid regret. I mean the real article! Burning misery, thoughts that can't be called home, a black void that scares one. Does it ever so faintly mean anything like that to you?"

"If you make me answer we cannot meet again," she said in a broken voice.

"No course without a compass, dear-est! Tell me honestly."

"A woman may love often, but she is only 'in love' once in her life, Trevor."

"Then—listen! Will you marry me on your own terms, Iris? No, I don't recant! I know I am letting you risk trouble; but I have come to think it will be a lesser trouble, and circum-

stances have changed a little. You know that our sitting member of parliament must retire shortly on account of ill health. My father has been nominated by the local association; he will probably be elected. As the daughter-in-law of an M. P. you would hold a better social position than I could offer you as the wife of a young stockbroker. Many people would have to be cordial to us, because naturally you would act as hostess for my father. I think that should make a great difference. The other prospect is unbearable! Will you, Iris? Will you? Ah, you said 'not again' till we were really engaged. In my arms, against my heart, you mean 'yes,' don't you?"

Two months later they were married. Huntley retained his bachelor service flat, and secured a pretty little house at Clarence Gate for Iris; but apparently there was so little of the unusual in their procedure that they were no more conspicuous than the ordinary young couples. In other words, the average of seven breakfasts a week was being maintained.

Trevor Huntley had a convincing air of contentment and well-being as he sat at his desk the morning after he had helped his wife to issue the cards for her first dinner party. It appeared to surprise Huntley père as he entered his son's office frowning slightly.

"What's all this talk about your wife and you not living together?" he asked peevishly.

"I'm naturally the last person to have information on that point," Trevor answered amiably. "I've heard nothing! I believe I explained our plans to you before we married."

"Oh, yes, you did mention something of the sort," his father admitted, "but of course, I thought when you were married you would knock all that silly nonsense out of her."

"I didn't get a chance to marry her till I had signed and sealed to it,"

Trevor replied, laughing. "I stood out for a year, and then I gave my word for it."

Huntley père suppressed a remark which might have suggested that his own word was not his bond.

"She must give it up of her own accord then," he said irritably. "This election is coming off shortly; it's going to be a bitter fight; a lot of personal matter will be introduced; and nothing could do me more harm with a certain section than to have such a scandal attached to my family as that my son and his wife—his newly married wife—don't live together!"

"In the scandalous sense that is quite untrue," Trevor retorted.

"For election purposes it can be stated in five words, my boy, while you would need five hundred to explain it!"

"It can be contradicted in three. A damn lie! Don't worry about it! I'll put in some clinking good work for you, sir! My wife will help me; and our being seen everywhere together will more than outweigh anything that is being said."

"Your wife and you?" Mr. Huntley exclaimed, pausing on his way to the door. "No, Trevor, if you can't rule her, and alter this state of things, you can't take part in my campaign. Every vote is going to count. I won't risk being accused of working hand and glove with any sort of crank! I tell you my friends don't like it either. They've no use for a man who isn't master in his own house. So once and for all you must make your wife come off her high horse, or you can have nothing to do with the canvass. And by the way, I shall have to decline this dinner invitation, also."

"As you please," Trevor replied dryly, and took up his pen again; but it was some minutes after his father's departure before he could still his inner turmoil. His political convictions were deep-seated. Work for his side

was not a hobby, it was a vital necessity to him. With one slash of the knife this great part of his life had been lopped away. "Oh, damn it!" he said, "if they can't get on without coming between a man and his wife, let them stew in their own grease."

He had hardly turned to his correspondence, however, when his office boy announced, "Mr. Denzill to see you, sir!" He looked up to encounter the more respectable, and the least likable of his wife's brothers.

"I saw my fiancée, Mrs. Morris, last night," Clarence Denzill said, dropping gracefully into an armchair. "She has just heard all this tommyrot about Iris and her notions, and I can tell you she is thoroughly shocked."

"Is she indeed?"

"Yes, absolutely! I can't say Iris thought much about me when she elected to make such a public exhibition of herself."

"She did not think about you at all, or your fiancée either."

"That's what I say," Clarence persisted. "The whole thing isn't like a marriage. Hang it! It isn't—it isn't decent, this visiting your wife as if she were——"

"I should advise you to think twice before you finish that sentence," Huntley remarked incisively.

"Well, you know what I mean," Clarence retorted. "Iris ought to have remembered that there are sanctities which a refined woman like Mrs. Morris is bound to consider—that marriage is an institution——"

"Framed for a certain purpose!" Huntley interrupted. "Or so I gather from my acquaintance with the marriage service. In the match which you are contemplating, Denzill, have you considered how you are going to preserve the sanctities, by carrying that purpose out?"

Clarence Denzill's flaccid countenance set in a mask of blank astonishment.

"You understand what I mean," Huntley continued remorsefully. "You are marrying a wealthy widow who is twenty years your senior. Your object is perfectly clear; hers I do not care to stigmatize; but I think the less either of you say about the sanctities of marriage, the better. My household will show in time how we regard them. Now you had better go."

Possibly Trevor Huntley was not above a sneaking sense of satisfaction that his father's frank selfishness was dwarfed by his brother-in-law's meanness; but he was a trifle ashamed of his outburst next day when he heard that both Mrs. Morris and her fiancé had accepted the dinner invitation. Everything promised a success for the young hostess till after luncheon on the important day when several people sent excuses which gave Iris some little difficulty in rearranging her table.

"Let me see! Humph! All Mrs. Morris' cronies!" Mrs. Hill, a sprightly matron who had taken to dropping informally, remarked when she heard the news. "But of course you know there have been dark hints! Not that I've heard anything worse than that your charming husband has solved the difficulty which puzzled the poor Frenchman who couldn't marry the lady for fear of having nowhere to spend his evenings! How utterly delicious to have a consciousness of rectitude and a reputation for impropriety! Most of us can only manage it the other way about."

"Conscious rectitude won't improve my table if there are any more accidents," Iris replied, with a little spasm of anxiety as she suddenly remembered her brother's peculiarities, and that as her father and her aunt were at Harrogate, there was no other member of her family to give her countenance and support.

Events were to prove her uneasiness well-founded; for at the end of the

usual trying ten minutes that evening, neither Clarence nor Mrs. Morris had arrived. Worse still, the latter's most intimate friend, and her two popular daughters were also absent. Young Mrs. Huntley marshaled her guests as well as she could, but no cleverness could hide the ragged arrangement; women were hopelessly in the minority, and before she reached her seat she knew that the absence of both families had been noted—that her guests were asking themselves why they had been rash enough to come. No one stayed late; the general exodus began at the first possible moment.

When the debacle was over Trevor held his wife in his arms and comforted her, giving her many assurances which he knew were but half truths; and presently she took heart again, and almost half believing them. But because there were reasons for not upsetting her just at present he did not announce his father's ultimatum; with the result that when the election came on them some three months later, he found himself forced to spend long evenings skulking in his bachelor quarters, or at some outlying music hall or billiard room, in order to leave her under the impression that he was on committee work.

"What a pity you can't be in this," Mrs. Hill said one afternoon to the young wife. "It's the first time your good man has tried his wings, isn't it? Later on, of course, you'll have to allow him the usual two months' matrimonial holiday. What a pity that so many of them take it not wisely, but too well! Can't resist trying to see what bachelor life looks like again, I suppose. And they quite forget how much more expensive it is to be found out! My husband has told me about a relative of his who absolutely allowed his business to be crippled, paying blackmail rather than let his wife know."

"He was probably very foolish not to tell her and get her help," Iris re-

plied. "There ought to be a second book of Job, telling us what Mrs. Job's comforters had to say to her. A wise woman doesn't dwell on that sort of possibility, any more than she pays attention to the family history of her cook and her needlewoman."

She was a trifle vexed with Mrs. Hill, but perfectly sincere in stating that foolish talk of that kind did not affect her. There was therefore, neither suspicion nor jealousy in her mind when, as she became peculiarly dependent on a companionship which gave all and asked for nothing, her husband suddenly began once more to exercise the right to absent himself without explanation. But though she was not suspicious, she was very deeply hurt; and thinking of him in all his strength and vigor, she could not help saying to herself a little bitterly, "Could ye not watch with me this one hour?"

She shook her trouble off, however, faced her loneliness, and took comfort in Trevor's panic-stricken devotion when their little daughter was born. Nor was she surprised that he did not spend many nights in the house during her convalescence, that his daily visits were of the briefest, and showed him a little awkward and constrained. The happiest time of the whole day for her came about ten o'clock, when one of the maids answered the telephone in the hall and connected with the instrument by her bedside, so that, for a few minutes, he could speak to her from the office with the old ardor in a new channel, adoration for the mother and the child.

She came downstairs in due course and presently was allowed to go for a drive. At the last moment Trevor telephoned an excuse. A couple of days later the morning inquiry came in the clear, cool voice of his stenographer. Iris answered briefly that she and the child were both well, therefore there was no further need for daily bulle-

tins. Then she hung up the receiver and gave way to a passionate resentment, whose steady growth she had not realized. Later in the morning restlessness took her; it seemed she must see Trevor at once—must get away from her thoughts. So she dressed with dainty care and drove to the city. She would get him to take her out to lunch and afterward do some shopping.

There were not many clerks in the outer office when she arrived. The boy who came forward to attend to her announced that Mr. Trevor Huntley had just gone out. "I will see Miss Orton then and leave a message," Iris said.

"Mr. Huntley has taken Miss Orton out to lunch with him, ma'am," the boy replied, adding naively, "You would find them at Slater's in Copthall Court. Mr. Huntley always goes there when he takes Miss Orton."

Young Mrs. Huntley was trembling a little when she reached the lift again. "Trevor taking his stenographer out? Surely that was not done?" She seemed to remember that she had intended to do some shopping, she had forgotten lunch as a preliminary, so she drove back to Oxford Street at once.

She had not had time to remove her hat on her return late in the afternoon, when Mrs. Hill was announced. She ordered tea, and nibbled the cakes because she would not admit the forgotten meal for fear of acknowledging the cause of her forgetfulness. Perfunctorily she discussed her purchases, her visitor's wardrobe, and wardrobes in general, till somehow the subject of Mrs. Morris' sables came up.

Then suddenly she found her guest saying, "What has your good man done to the woman to make her so spiteful? She is positively telling everybody that he didn't have anything at all to do with Huntley père's election campaign—as a fact, it appears that he was not on the committee—but that's no reason

why she should say that he spent the whole time knocking about town with—well, at any rate, without any male boon companion."

"It's very simple; she does not like my husband because he thinks her too old to have children," Iris answered with a careless laugh, congratulating herself because the laugh had not sounded too high-pitched and artificial.

An hour later as she lay exhausted on a couch Trevor came in. "They tell me in the office that I just missed you," he said nervously. "I'm awfully sorry! Why didn't you phone? I say—wasn't it too soon? I don't think you are up to the city yet a while."

"I'm all right," she answered, "but I don't think I shall try it again for a long time."

"Sure you're all right?" he questioned, kneeling beside her. "If you think you are, I want to ask you something? I've had some rather heavy calls to meet lately, and I'm—not stumped exactly, but I've got uses for my money. No need for explanations between us two, is there? And what I want to know is, could you without—I mean would it bother you to settle with the landlord this quarter, and—and to manage the ordinary carrying-on expenses just for a time?"

"I can do that certainly," she assented in a maze of dull astonishment.

"Not the extraneous expenses," he added hurriedly. "I've settled the bills for—for that little extravagance of ours upstairs. I'm awfully sorry to have to ask you, but you mustn't worry—merely a temporary tightness—a little dipped this last two months—that's all."

This last two months! The matrimonial holiday! Iris Huntley bit her lips to keep back the high-pitched laugh she had avoided with Mrs. Hill.

"Shall you—will it pinch you very much?"

"No, I have plenty of ready money."

He lifted her feet from the sofa,

made room for himself, and gathered her up to him, whispering, "Darling!"

"Would you mind opening the window?" she asked. "It's oppressively close, isn't it?"

He moved away at once, opened the window, and stood by it with his back to her. Her heart was beating heavily; he had deceived her so early, so very early; he mocked her now with her own words "no explanations." More than all, there was his confidence that he could still lure her with the old love call. But had she not said something to that babbling woman, asserting that in a case like this, the wife could be trusted to know and help? Was that true? She rallied her forces and spoke again:

"Would a little capital be useful? If so——"

"Oh, no! Not necessary—many thanks, all the same," he mumbled hastily; and turned with all too evident relief as a maid opened the door and announced, "Dinner is ready, ma'am."

Throughout the meal they made desultory conversation for each other, but a few minutes after they returned to the drawing-room he said to her with nervous roughness, "Look here! I think you ought to be in bed. I'll just run upstairs, if I may, and have a look at the youngster; then I'll be off, and not keep you up any longer."

She nodded assent. He moved to the door, paused a moment, then turned toward her, holding out his hand.

"Coming with me?" he asked.

Something within her struggled to free itself and by its primal force almost raised her to her feet; but memory brought the echo of the business girl's voice that morning, making the duty call for her who had paid the woman's price for love.

"No, I shall sit up a little longer," she answered, and picking up a magazine settled back among her cushions.

"Good night, then," he said abruptly,

and passed out. Then minutes later she heard him leave the house.

There was no official separation between husband and wife. He merely ceased to claim the privilege of the super-guest. She never offered anything. Before the next quarter day came round, old Mr. Denzill had died, leaving half his property to his daughter; and financial matters had not been referred to again by either of them. Their little social world was beginning to take a more lenient view of Mrs. Huntley now that the case resolved itself apparently into the everyday matter of an errant husband; and as the fault was understood to be entirely his, no one objected to meeting him. He was always on duty at such functions as his wife's bereavement permitted.

By the time Iris was out of mourning she had formed her own circle, and went about a great deal. She forbade herself to become engrossed in her baby, the result of a "brief incident." She had not seen her husband for some weeks when one afternoon, returning early from a *matinée* which had bored her, she heard from a rather shame-faced maid that "the master was in the nursery."

"Has he been waiting for me long?" Mrs. Huntley asked.

"No, ma'am, he isn't waiting," the maid replied. "Mr. Huntley generally knows when you're out. He telephones to nurse every day, and comes pretty regular."

With her lips set, Iris loosened her wraps and went upstairs. In the nurse's chair by the fireguard Trevor was sitting with the child asleep in his arms; on the rug at his feet, various woolly animals in antic attitudes testified to the sports which had been in progress.

"I did not know you cared much about children," she said with cold jealousy.

"No? Why not?" he asked, reddening a little.

"Because you said once, that one was enough."

"Oh, then!" he muttered. "I suppose every married man says that, the morning after the first one is born. If I said it later—I don't remember what I said—it must have been because one wants the youngsters, if there are any, to have as good a chance as one had oneself, and I was beginning to doubt whether I could do much even for this first one. That's what I want to talk to you about."

"Something has happened?" she inquired.

"No; things have ceased happening now. It's all over but the shouting, and no one is hurt enough to shout very loud. Shall we go downstairs? No use waking the little one."

He crossed to the crib. She noted with unreasoning resentment his dexterity in opening it and removing his arm from under the small soft body. Beyond doubt or question the child meant much to him. Even this she had not known.

He drew up a chair for her as they entered the drawing-room, and began at once. "Of course you know plenty of city people; they and their wives seem to have been pretty decent to you. I don't fancy you've heard much——"

"A little perhaps from Mrs. Hill; just a hint or two," she answered.

"I rather thought you didn't know," he rejoined in some confusion. "I thought somehow that if you had really heard you would have—but no matter! In a way, of course, it simplifies matters, for it's not pleasant to have to say damaging things about one's own father. All stockbrokers are not princes of finance; and to pose as one, for the sake of the *entrée* into certain circles, is a dangerous game. It's not an easy business to be honest in at any time, and when a man has risked too much and starts to wriggle out, he has to do his wriggling so near the line that it's more

by good luck than good management if he keeps within the law. I don't suppose I need go into details; except to say that I found out what was going on just in time. Then I insisted on taking hold myself, and we got out safely. My father is going to retire, both from business and public life. There won't be any disgrace for the youngster to face; but I want you to know that at one time things were so critical, I was so hard pressed, that I really could not do the things I ought to have done for you and the child."

At the bottom of her heart Iris Huntley was deeply stirred at what he had gone through, at the horrible blow to his pride even this bald confession entailed; but blazing in her was a fierce resentment that he had not brought his troubles to her. "You never told me any of this," she said.

"How could I?" he objected. "According to contract it seemed distinctly a time to keep away! I certainly was an impossible person to live with while it lasted."

"Did your stenographer find you so?"

For the first time he looked at her directly, and of course he saw a faint curve of scorn on her lips, pains foolish facial trick when the sufferer is a woman.

"If you mean, did I bully Miss Orton—no, I didn't. I needed her badly. If you mean anything else—no again."

"She knew all your affairs, I presume?"

"Yes, I took her into my confidence; it saved me a lot of trouble, and she stuck to me loyally all through."

"Your confidences included the state of your domestic affairs, didn't they?"

"My bachelor establishment was a thing known to my staff from the first," Trevor replied with a touch of impatience. "You're responsible for that, and please don't try to make me shoulder it. You may possibly remember that we set out to teach benighted con-

ventionalists 'how to be happy though married.' At a time of crisis some person in the office must know one's whereabouts, hour by hour; so you may take it that Miss Orton knew my movements. Any objection?"

"I've made none. I believe that she not only knew your movements but was with you a good deal, both in and out of office hours."

"So that's it!" he said with a shrug of the shoulders. "Yes, there were people in the office I did not trust, so I took her out several times and gave her private instructions while we waited for food. There were men I had to see instantly, if I could get them; and others I couldn't face till I was ready. Yes—it was as bad as all that! She helped me do the vanishing trick when it was necessary; but I've managed to get off the rocks at last."

He paused as though all was said, then, on second thought, added, "Perhaps that isn't full enough. I don't wish to hold anything back. I've seen a good deal of Miss Orton, and I've had a good deal more from her than mere business loyalty. That sort of situation is never a safe one for a married bachelor and a spinster girl. Your thought is right there! On the other hand she is a particularly good girl; I think she has always had a fair idea how things are with me—that there was never more than one woman for whom I was prepared to make a fool of myself. But even supposing I'm wrong about that, my renewed visits here have kept everything on the right level and prevented any possible mistake on her part."

"Then your nursery visits have been made in Miss Orton's interests?"

"And in my own. Not blinking the fact that when a man has lost his wife he does begin to speculate about other possibilities. I'm not carrying much cargo now, pretty light in the water for the sort of weather I've been mak-

ing lately, and the youngster has been ballast for me. As a matter of fact she has been a good deal more than that—but naturally that doesn't interest you. I merely want you to know that I've been practically buying my child's good name. That's why I've had nothing to spare for rent, taxes, and the rest of it."

His wife was conscious that she had offered him no word of sympathy yet; she was indeed powerless to do so with this new, bitter jealousy of the other woman as his helpmate, coupled with the memory of the early, unexplained deception.

"If you had let me know I might have helped you," she said.

"How?" he asked and looked at her.

"Why with my father's money, I suppose," she answered, flushing slightly. "If you remember, I offered you what I had, and you would not accept it."

"Thanks, but it was quite out of the question."

"It's often done."

"Not in our circumstances."

"The circumstances you probably allude to," she retorted coldly, "had not arisen when this trouble appears to have begun; but I was not allowed to share the confidences you imparted to your typist."

"The trouble began," he answered grimly, "when the little one was expected almost any time; and you forget that I did not know how bad the thing might prove. I was afraid to tell you—afraid I couldn't hide it, so I just kept away. Later on, when you were well again, I tried to open up—managed to tell you the least part of it, my temporary embarrassment, but you very promptly and definitely gave me the key of the street."

"No," she cried indignantly.

"Oh, yes, you did!" he insisted. "I said I was going to see the youngster. I asked you to come upstairs with me and you refused."

"Then you may as well know why I refused," she cried. "It had nothing to do with money matters, as you so flatteringly suggest. The thing happened because I had just heard that during the time you were supposed to be working for your father's election you were mysteriously occupied in some other direction."

"So that accursed time is what has been held against me!" he exclaimed fiercely. "Well, I shall not explain. I'll be hanged if I do! I make you a present of it as your excuse—"

He broke off in his angry tirade and sprang toward the door. The child in the room above had awakened from her sleep, and like a perfectly healthy normal baby; had voiced a loud protest at finding herself unattended, an exceeding bitter cry to unaccustomed ears.

"I forgot," Trevor said, checking himself at the door and facing about with a rather sheepish smile. "Of course you have excellent maids; nurse is up there and will go to her."

His wife was looking at him, smiling the smile of the eternal feminine when she discovers, as all women do, that her man is only an overgrown boy. It is a smile that is not mocking, a very beautiful smile on even the plainest face, and Iris Huntley was not a plain woman.

"What a mess we've made of things," he said, turning his dazzled eyes away from it, his anger growing with a new impatience. "I was ready enough to pay for the privileges of marriage by accepting its disabilities! If we had been too poor to get away from each other—if we had had to live under one roof because we couldn't pay for two, I should have had a thundering row with you and told you what I thought of you. Incidentally, it would have come out what I'd been doing. My father kicked me out of his campaign because he said he wasn't going to be seen working with a damn crank who

wasn't master in his own house. So I put in my time at inane variety shows, or playing billiards, anything to kill time, and all alone; the biggest disappointment I ever had! And I didn't tell you what you'd done for me because you were—because I thought—Listen! That child hasn't stopped crying! *Do* your women know what to do for her?"

"If you doubt it," Iris said, passing him on her way to the door, "why don't you come upstairs and find out?"

He stood for a moment transfixed with astonishment, then he drew a deep breath and asked sharply, "With you?"

She turned her head over her shoulder and nodded, her eyes laughing, her cheeks aflame.

He flung the door open with his right hand, passed his left round her waist, and hurried her across the hall. Half-way up the stairs he looked down at her triumphantly. "The youngster has stopped crying," he said; "nurse is with her. They're all right."



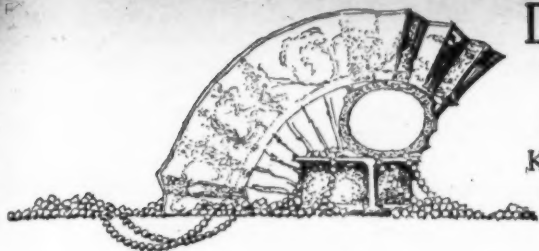
TREASURE

I HAVE no need of a treasure chest
Crammed with the minted gold—
For my heart has garnered all the best
Life and the world may hold:
Joy in the dew, the dusk, the shine,
The seas of golden grain,
In a horse whose heart is one with mine,
Rocketing down the plain.

The loser's ache, the winner's thrill—
Neither would I spare.
A flame at night on a windy hill,
A half-hushed chanted prayer,
A long caress—the first, the last—
A bugle blown through the wild,
A face in the miracle peace of death,
The laugh of a happy child.

Tedious reckoning treasures mine!
Your tale would run through days—
Oh, hands that clasp me! Oh, eyes that shine
Through memory's haunted haze!
Heaped and holy my treasure gleams
To light me to the end;
Its rarest gleam is the ray that streams
From the heart of a faithful friend.

MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



Diamond Cut Diamond

By

Katharine Haviland Taylor

Author of "Barbara of Baltimore,"

"Yellow Soap," etc.

MACK TYLER had an almost incorrigible appetite for romance. He hungered for it always, sought it, but like a good many other much-wanted things, in which group perhaps pleasure is most notable, romance grew shy and, the more he pursued it, the more reluctant it was to become his.

He was flaunting his favorite theme to me as we waited for Ed Hinton to select stick pins for his ushers. "Look around you," advised Mack. "Romance on every side, stories that hold the lure of the moon, and a hint of tropical seas. In those diamonds I see tales that enchant—offerings to savage queens—the story of a dance and a king's infatuation—"

"Probably dug 'em up and shipped 'em straight here," I objected.

"No, no! That's where you're wrong," he contradicted. "Every diamond holds a story."

I suppose I looked skeptical. Certainly I felt so as my eyes wandered over the sumptuous interior of the great shop, for it did not seem to me that there was much room for romance to set up her loom or to weave. The dollar mark was everywhere.

"Well, they do mine them," I offered, but feebly. Mack talks well and is a victim of convictions even while perfectly sober.

"Agreed," responded Mack, "but they also buy them. Every day people come in here, with jewels that once meant

everything, but which have changed with time, to become only financially valuable. Or else—they part with them reluctantly. You see a woman borrow on her pearls—oh, yes, often done—and you can imagine that she is buying the silence of a maid who saw too much, or that she is forced to get money somehow, because her husband no longer gives it to her. Or——"

Mack stopped. His eyes had wandered past me.

"The place for that sort of thing is a pawnshop," I said. "I don't believe buying is often done here."

"Yes it is," he answered, "when people have really good stones."

"I never saw it." I stated. Mack put a hand on my arm.

"Move up," he whispered. "No, don't turn like that, you ass! I want to go over near that girl—she's selling a ring."

Idly, as if we were naturally progressing because of the contents of the show case, we moved along.

"Romance!" breathed Mack, over his shoulder. "My gosh, she's a looker!"

I agreed, and then, close to the "looker," we paused. I felt something of a cad, for our presence bothered her, but Mack was finding a story, and so felt no lack of delicacy.

"It—it was left to me," we heard in a soft, rather low, sweet voice, "and I support myself by painting, and so, quite naturally, I am poor. A ring like that would look absurd on me."

She smiled shyly on the clerk, whom I immediately disliked, and he answered her smile. "It is good?" she asked wistfully.

He examined it.

"Very good," he replied; "of course the setting——"

"Is old, I know," she ended, "an aunt left it to me. I—I would be glad to sell it." She looked around, her face again shy.

"Attic room," whispered Mack, "easels, nothing to eat for three days, at last she thought of her aunt's ring."

"Shut up," I ordered. I wanted to hear her speak again. I am not romantic or anything like that, but I was interested in that girl. I could see her standing before an easel, head to one side, palette over her thumb, dripping paint brush in the other hand. In fancy, I could see her that way and I wanted to, in reality. I was fascinated.

"Wonder what she paints?" mused Mack between his teeth.

"Landscapes," I answered. I could see them, imaginative, perhaps like Corot's, fanciful. "Silver mists and rose-pink dawns! Certainly not her face," I added admiringly.

"Not hers!" answered Mack in a tone that was too loud for caution. We had moved along out of hearing, but we still watched the dealings, more or less circumspectly, and when we saw an older man draw near, and our little artist stuff a huge roll of bills into her worn bag, we were both relieved.

We watched her until her silhouette was only a black shadow against the glare of the street, not speaking until she had disappeared. After she had, Mack approached the clerk, requested to see the ring and, much to my surprise, bought it.

"Every diamond holds a story," he said sentimentally, "perhaps, this——" He paused, looking down at it.

"What'll Louise think?" I asked. Louise is Mack's wife.

"Louise?" he echoed, "Oh, I dunno. She won't have to know. My idea, Dean, is to find that girl, give her back her ring, buy a picture or two—you know—give her a boost, help her have her chance to paint." He wagged his head solemnly. "Who knows," he inquired, "where this little ring may lead me?"

I told him he didn't need any leading, after which he favored me with a glare.

"A man's motives are never understood," he stated peevishly. "Here I want to *help* that girl——"

Then we looked up, saw Ed Hinton coming toward us, stood on both feet, and got ready to move on. "Got 'em, boys," he informed us, "think they're not half bad. Hope the waiting hasn't bored you."

"Oh, no!" said Mack. "Oh, no!"

A month after that the rest of the story came out. It was at tea time on the lawn of Mack's Southampton place, and I was sitting alone, waiting for Louise to get through with an auction orgy and for Mack to finish his golf. I had motored down that afternoon and, as yet, had seen neither my host nor hostess.

It was shady, quiet, and cool in the spot I had selected, and Mack's loud hail was not welcome. However, after he began his story, I forgot my resentment against him for shattering my rest.

"Dean," he said, as he threw down his bag, and dropped into a wicker chair, "Dean, remember that ring?"

"Sure," I answered slowly.

"Well," he scratched a match and lit a cigarette. "I gave it back to her. Whatcha think of it? Met her on the street. She was dressed better—I was glad to see that—but she confided to me that she had been hard up. And grateful?" his voice dropped, his eyes

became moony. "Gad, Dean, she was grateful!"

"You're doing so *much* for me," she said, 'course I said I wasn't. 'I loved that little ring,' she went on, and by jingo, her eyes filled with tears. Well, you know me, Dean, tenderhearted as a woman. Found myself holding her hands, and loaning her my handkerchief—gad! I tell yuh! Then she asked me whether I'd tied that little piece of red ribbon around it—I had, so it wouldn't get lost. Had it in my stud box and, believe it or not, Dean, she said she'd always keep that dog-gone piece of hemp!"

"Going to help her along some more?" I asked; "buy some pictures; have your portrait painted?"

"No," he answered. "She's leaving town. I offered to let her paint me, but even that didn't hold her, although of course she said she was mad to do it."

I grinned, but he missed my expression, for Louise was approaching us. As she joined us she greeted me enthusiastically, sat down, and we talked as a servant drew near with a table and another with the tea things.

"Lovely to see you," said Louise. "Mack's so absent-minded that he is no good at all. I can't figure what's up with him. Lemoñ, Benson."

"I'm not," grunted Mack.

"You're not? Why," Louise moved, began to pour, "the other day I lost my studs, and had to find something in a hurry for my sport things, and I went to your room and there, in your stud box, Mack, I found a ring I'd thought lost for *ages*—a ring I've had for years. There it was—in his box, all beautifully tied with a red, red ribbon! You know, I felt so guilty—that's short bread, Dean—because I'd thought some one stole it. Remember the time I was thrown from a horse last fall? Paper chase, if I recall correctly. Well, I *had* to go to the Jamison-Lathrop's dinner soon after and one arm was frightfully blue, and I had a girl in to paint it. Quite an art, I assure you; she is famous. Just after that I missed my ring, and I thought she'd taken it. It wasn't well set, but it was rather dear!"

"You bet it was!" moaned Mack. Then he held up three fingers to me, which I judged signified three hundred.

"Where is it now?" asked Louise.

"Damned if I know," answered Mack. "Say, you know I'd like to give that girl a chance for a good job! Like to help her on I would, and I'd fix it—so she could get her model from a mirror!"



REMEMBRANCE

I THOUGHT I had triumphed your step, your face;
I dreamed I had left them behind at last;
Forgotten the thrill of your close embrace,
Forgotten the pulse of the tender past.

But a smile in the crowd, a voice half heard,
A pose of the head, or a well-known strain,
A jest, a laugh, or a subtle word—
And the years of forgetting have been in vain!

JANIS RANDOLPH.

The Little Pawn

By Margaret Widdemer

Author of "The Old Road to Paradise,"
"The Boardwalk," etc.



IN every story something goes wrong for a while, or else there would be nothing to tell. Usually it is put wrong by somebody. But in this case the cause seems not to have been a person particularly. It seems to have been the charm, the love-drawing power, with which gay, gentle Gerard Stuart was born; a charm which made people remember and speak of him, if they had only crossed his path once; which both made men and women love him from a chance meeting, and remember him vividly on the strength of an afternoon together.

As ages go, they were all very young to have their lives to play with; Gerard, his sister Estelle, and the pretty country bride, Myretta. Gerard was only twenty-five when he married Myretta, a child, we would say now, of seventeen. But things were different then. It was over a generation ago. In these carefully plotted and diagrammed days when even murders are done thoughtfully by sober-minded professionals, that generation seems to us like a crowd of passionate, too-powerful children. They loved and believed and made messes of things, and told God all about it, and proved it by the Bible, and then lived on as intensely and blunderingly as before!

We call it temperament now, the pas-

sionate intensity and vitality and charm which Gerard and his sister, Estelle, possessed. In those days people said that the Stuarts were very magnetic and talented, and a little impulsive. Till Gerard's marriage Estelle and he had lived together in the pretty little college town where he had a professorship. Estelle had been married at nineteen, and lost her young husband within the year. She was twenty-three now, still unable to speak of him without wet eyes and an obvious grip on herself. She had loved him dearly. But that love, faithful as it was, was nothing to her feeling for her brother. They were like lovers, as she liked to hear people say. She adored her brother more than even God. She thought she loved God best—she was very religious—but she probably was wrong.

They both were always having ardent, temporary love affairs. With so much emotion, it had to be expended somehow. And engagements were easier to slip on and off in those days of the eighties, when young people did not stop to think about such things as the cost of living, or the appalling permanence of marriage. Estelle and Gerard would laugh together about their love affairs, strolling up and down the garden in the summer twilights.

So when Gerard, returning from a

vacation in the country, announced that he was engaged to Myretta Winters, the daughter of the farmer with whom he had boarded, his family took it lightly. It was not till he explained further that they planned to be married in two weeks that his mother looked shocked, his father approving, and Estelle turned white and flung herself on the scarlet velvet sofa in old Doctor Stuart's parlor, where they had all assembled to rejoice over Gerard's homecoming.

"I was so lonely, and she was so young and pretty, and I could see she loved me, and she took my proposal so seriously!" he told Estelle, alone with her at the end of a miserable afternoon. He added, what was also the truth, that he loved Myretta more than he ever had any other girl. But Estelle paid no heed to that. She sat up and dried her eyes, flung herself into her brother's arms and smiled. To her dying day she believed that Myretta had fooled Gerard into marrying her!

"My poor darling!" she said. "I didn't understand."

Gerard did not follow her. He thought that he had simply made Myretta's charms clear enough to carry conviction to Estelle, and had also tactfully soothed his sister's feelings.

"You'll love her for my sake, Estelle, darling," he answered confidently.

"I'll try, dearest," she answered, with a look of high devotion on her little, dark, vivid face. She tried to smile at him bravely, rose to make her way to the door, and there dropped in a faint of pure suffering.

"You shall live with us! You shall always live with us, little sister!" promised her brother when they had revived her. "And we will all love each other, and be very happy."

So on that basis the household was begun; Gerard, Estelle, and Myretta; all wanting to do the very best they could, and to be good and love each

other. And, curiously enough, for a while it worked very well.

Myretta was a New England country girl of good old stock, brought up in an inarticulate, Spartan school. Her people used speech to say that they were hungry or thirsty, to express necessary facts meagerly to each other. Gerard had flashed upon that household, with its severe standards and its shut lips, like a young god. Of language as a brilliant, gleaming weapon of grace they knew nothing; of the power of personality they thought less. Whatever Myretta might feel, and she took life seriously, she had scarcely more means for telling about it than an animal.

Gerard, of course, did not think she was at all this sort of a girl. She was tall and wide-shouldered, and slow moving, with a fair, clear-cut face which showed little change. She did not seem what she was—helpless, a little awed, and childlike. He took her quietude for subtlety of soul, and wisdom, and comprehension of him. But their standards were so different that as a matter of fact they knew scarcely anything about each other.

It amounted to this: Myretta was an alien Gerard had married because he loved her. Estelle and he were so akin that they scarcely needed words to express themselves to each other. All that saved the situation at the beginning was that everybody honestly wanted to do the best he could, and that both women loved Gerard and he loved them. But as time went on the mutual understanding grew less.

Myretta could not realize how people who were good could lose their tempers as the Stuarts did; or, having lost them, turn sunny again all in a minute, and ask—and receive—forgiveness. Gerard's temper was gay and sweet unless he was overtired, and Myretta made allowance for that. But Estelle would go into a rage at her brother, hurl brilliant insults at him, burst into

stormy weeping—and it all meant nothing, as she would sunnily and amusedly explain ten minutes later, sitting on Gerard's knee and talking airily to Myretta between his kisses. And he would assent to the statement that it meant nothing, amused as if she were an adorable and naughty child.

Myretta would sit and look at them with her wide, blue eyes, shocked, and frightened. When Estelle first flew at her she was so shocked that she was scarcely angry.

"A woman who loves the Lord and says her prayers should not say such untrue things to her brother's wife!" she told Estelle solemnly when Estelle was over it and asked for forgiveness. "It means nothing to you!" said Myretta in honest astonishment. "You shouldn't let yourself get so angry, Estelle. It's wrong."

Estelle's latent jealousy flamed anew after this, and she monopolized Gerard's society. It wasn't hard, for he and his wife had absolutely nothing, mentally, in common. But there was still love, and if Estelle had only gone away, things would have straightened out. But Gerard, with the passionate and unreasonable optimism which usually goes with dominant charm, insisted that she should stay. They would learn to love each other after a while, his two dearest; and Estelle was lonely and cared too much for Gerard to leave him.

"Leave you alone with that sullen, illiterate child?" she said once when he was tentatively suggesting it to her. "Oh, no, no, I love you too much."

He was moved by that, in spite of her fling at Myretta. And aside from his deep love for her, her brilliant mind represented a necessity to him.

"You mustn't talk that way about her, little sister," he admonished her gently. "But try to be more self-controlled, dear. You make it very hard for me."

She was melted at that, and promised that she would.

"I will try to see the lovely things in Myretta!" she vowed, lifting her great, melting, black eyes to his.

For days afterward she was, with the sincerest of good intentions, gentle to her sister-in-law as one is with a child whom one forgives much. Myretta stood it with the sullenness Estelle had pointed out. In her home one such gust of the wild anger as Estelle had given way to would have been a thing to make her silent, kind, old father take the culprit aside for long warning and prayers. She tried to understand the new standards, and only could think them unpardonable. And Estelle was elaborately forgiving *her*, and coaxing admiration from Gerard on the strength of it!

Then, quite suddenly, in the middle of Estelle bearing ostentatiously with Myretta and Myretta frankly enduring Estelle, came the news that Myretta was going to have a baby. Myretta was half frightened when she nerved herself to go and tell Gerard about it. He might be angry—how could you know how these strange people were going to take things?

So when her husband clasped her tight in his arms, flushed with happiness at her tidings, and laughed and exulted over them, she was very grateful and happy; almost happy enough to forgive Estelle. But Estelle lost her temper and Gerard sent her home.

"I don't bear any malice," she told him on the way to the station. "Whenever you want me, whenever you need me, I will come back to you, dear!"

Gerard was moved by her devotion. "Dear little sister, we shall see each other soon," he promised as he put her on the train. "I suppose you can't help being naughty."

He missed her; her bright, swift comprehension, her laughter, the quick flash of her as she fluttered about the house. But he loved Myretta, and the two were quietly happy together. They might have been happy to the end of their

days if they could only have been left—together.

When the baby came it was the prettiest and healthiest of little girls. In their first joy over little Agnes, Myretta herself, after a passionately penitent letter from Estelle, suggested asking her to come with her father and mother for a day of baby worship and tacit reconciliation. So she was sent for and came with the others, and it went off well.

Curiously enough, Estelle showed no jealousy of the baby. It may have been that she simply excluded from her mind the fact that it was Myretta's. At least, she denied its mother's part in it vehemently to her parents and brother. It was a Stuart. It would have been the same Agnes, no matter whom Gerard had chanced to marry.

The baby did not like Estelle as much as she liked the baby, at first. Agnes was a plump, happy thing who clung to her mother and went into ecstasies at the sight of Gerard—but for the first few months of her life the sight of Estelle anywhere was enough to make her scream. But in the course of time Estelle's unvarying baby worship and un-rebuffable adoration won Miss Agnes to toleration, and finally, under orders, to "loving Nana pretty."

This was all very well for every one as long as "Nana's" gay laughter and dangling earrings and rustling silk skirts only dawned on the baby once in a while. But presently there came another long visit.

"Will I never get rid of her?" demanded Myretta despairingly of herself.

But for a while she was patient and Estelle was patient; and Gerard, of course, thought they had achieved mutual affection at last, and was correspondingly happy. And because it made him so happy they both tried to let him think so. He was at his gayest and most delightful, watching them together, Estelle with her childlike bright-

ness and Myretta, prettily matronly over her baby.

And then one evening, with scarcely a visible cause, the old hatred flashed out. Both girls had kept it under as long as they could; and Gerard was not there to serve as a check. He had been out in the snow, a deep, nasty, wet snow, and as he had a cold already Myretta had insisted on his going upstairs and changing. Grippe was raging for the first time in America, influenza in unmodified form, and Myretta was afraid for him. Estelle was secretly ruffled at Myretta's air of affectionate ownership. She was watching her make something for little Agnes, and presently began to supervise its construction, more sharply than she knew. Myretta felt her tone, and said, with her own entire absence of ability to say things gracefully:

"Please don't interfere any more. Agnes is my child, not yours."

"Your child!" Estelle flashed back. "Gerard's child, you mean. He'd have had her no matter whom he married. If he chose to send her away from you this minute you couldn't do a thing."

This happened to be true as the law then was in that State, but Myretta had never known it.

"Nobody can take my baby!" she said, turning white.

"Gerard can if he chooses!" Estelle taunted her idly.

And then quiet, inarticulate Myretta went berserk.

"You will if you can!" she cried. "I know you will, you cruel, dreadful, unprincipled woman! You'd take my husband and child both if you could, and leave me nothing on earth!"

"If you don't improve," said Estelle angrily, "I may!"

Myretta took every word of threat for a serious intent. She sprang at the smaller woman and caught her throat. "You shan't have my baby! You shan't!" she screamed, tightening her

fingers so that the amethyst cross on Estelle's necklace sank into the skin.

"You're—crazy!" choked Estelle, trying to loosen the strong fingers. "If you behave this way we'll put you in a madhouse!"

Myretta screamed and choked Estelle harder. Estelle struck wildly at her. Altogether it was an indecent scene. Gerard had run downstairs at the sounds, and wrenched them apart.

"What is it? What is it, Myretta?" he asked. He took for granted that Estelle had been at fault, but Myretta did not realize that. She thought herself accused.

"She says I'm crazy! She says you'll put me in a madhouse and take my baby!" shrieked Myretta. The feeling deep in her heart that Gerard took Estelle's part more than he should, prevented her from believing in his championship. As he continued to hold her, looking angrily at Estelle for an explanation, his wife struggled silently to get away from him. She was too done to say anything more.

If her husband had thought to explain to her that nobody had any idea of putting her in a madhouse, or taking the baby, or doing anything but rebuking Estelle, things would have been all right. But he saw merely a fit of temper like Estelle's, and treated her as he would have treated his sister; picking her up and carrying her to her bedroom, where he locked her in.

She lay panting on the bed for a little. Then she rose and methodically tidied herself and took some sal volatile. She packed a handbag with her clothes, dropped it from her second-story window, and climbed out herself. There were thick vines; it was not much of a feat for a country-bred girl, who had been a tree-climbing child only a little while ago. She ran through the wet, deep snow she had been afraid of for Gerard, straight to the house where the dean of the college lived. She burst

into the room where he and his wife were reading, one each side of the lamp-lit table, and, clinging to the dean's wife, poured out her wild story.

It sounded wild enough, but Myretta had come to exactly the right place for sympathy, for, as she knew, the dean's wife did not specially like Gerard. Besides, the Stuarts' maid had told tales of Estelle's wild tempers, and Gerard's patience with them, and of Myretta's silence. Also, Myretta had that gift of convincingness which belongs to habitually silent, simply-spoken people. And she was obviously terrified to death.

All she asked was the loan of car fare home to her people.

"Father'll send you the money," she said over and over. "I must run away from them. I must run away!"

She was unreasonable with terror, and a more sensible woman would have seen that and detained her. But the dean's wife was not especially sensible, and easily thrilled by drama. While the dean, doing the sensible thing, was gone to get Gerard, his wife, aflame with sympathy and excitement, gave Myretta coffee and car fare, although she did not suggest dry stockings, and sped her on her way to the eleven-ten train. When the dean returned with Gerard, the train had gone, and, as his lady pointed out with a good deal of pride in her rescue of the unfortunate, Mrs. Stuart was on it.

There was no train till the next day at ten. Gerard walked through the storm to the telegraph office, sent a telegram to say that he was coming after his wife, and went back to the house, where Estelle was sobbing over the sleeping baby. He did not reproach his sister. He had not the heart. Nothing like this had ever happened before, and he was half stunned by it.

"This is all I have left now, Estelle," was all he said, pointing to the little flushed, serenely sleeping Agnes. He was flushed, too, shivering and wet through,

but Estelle was not given to thinking of bodily needs, but only of emotional ones. She threw herself into his arms.

"No, no! you have me!" she pleaded. "I was bad, I was wicked, I shouldn't have teased her when I knew what she was—but I love you better than any one on earth!"

She was all he had to comfort him, and Gerard was one of those persons to whom love and devotion are more necessary than food. His arms closed around the little vivid, loving figure in its crimson silks.

"My dear, dear little sister!" he said. "And when she comes back you will be different, won't you?"

"I will try harder and harder!" vowed Estelle. "I will bear more and more——"

They sat there hand in hand till nearly one o'clock. And the next morning Gerard was too ill to rise. His cold developed into, not gripe, but rheumatic fever. Estelle, of course, stayed with him to nurse him. There could be no question of his going masterfully after his wife. He could not even move his hands to write. Estelle did, at his dictation; but Myretta did not return, nor answer.

Naturally the thing took wing. The dean's wife saw no reason for holding her tongue; gossip was a fine art with her. When Gerard's friends asked Estelle about it she did exactly the wrong thing. She could have held herself to a quiet statement or evasion which, together with Gerard's popularity and illness, and the fact that Myretta had put herself in the wrong by leaving her husband and baby, would have made public opinion come entirely her brother's way. Instead, she spoke bitterly against her sister-in-law, and thus did Gerard's cause all the harm possible.

He continued to be very sick. He never spoke of Myretta to Estelle; he had learned not to long ago. He clung to the baby; never seemed to want it

away from him. Little Agnes, like most other people, loved to be with Gerard. She would stay quiet on the cot beside him for hours.

It was just when Gerard was beginning to show signs of improvement that Myretta's sister came. The maid whispered it through the door to Estelle, who was sitting by her brother.

Estelle exclaimed with annoyance, but since she was there, went down to see her.

The latter sat stiffly in the parlor, a hardened, drawn spinster. It was obvious before she spoke that she hated the Stuarts and her errand.

"I'm Augusta Winters, Myretta's sister," she introduced herself abruptly. "She's dangerously sick. The doctor says she mayn't live if she doesn't see the child. She had gripe and it turned into pneumonia. She got it in the snow. Here's his letter. I came to ask you to let her have Agnes, just to see, anyway. You could send some one with the baby, to bring it back. She's half crazy about it. Its grandmother could come up with it—or you——"

She stopped. She had spoken with a sort of hard agony. Estelle glanced at the letter. It was a scrawl from a country practitioner; doubtless a friend of Myretta's, helping her gain her ends.

"Let you have my brother's child on a pretext like that?" she said. "She's an unnatural mother. She abandoned it. Let her take the consequences."

"It's not a pretext," said the sister, clenching one work-knotted hand unseen at her side, and speaking with the quietude Estelle misunderstood.

"I can't believe it!" said Estelle.

"She's dying, I tell you, little Retta's dying! Oh, ain't you got any humanity? Where's Gerard?"

"He is ill—genuinely ill," said Estelle bitterly. "The child is all she's left him. We won't give her up. You may go to law if you want her, or Myretta may come back to her husband."

"Retta'd be dead before law'd do anything," Augusta Winters said. "If you won't give me the baby I'll hunt this house over and take her."

She walked implacably to the door.

"Look if you like," said Estelle daringly. A thought had come to her for getting this woman quietly out of the house. "She's not in this town. She's with her grandmother."

"I will look," said Augusta Winters.

Estelle showed her silently through the nursery. She showed her all the other rooms. Then she opened the door of Gerard's bedroom. She had remembered that as he lay, his body hid the sleeping baby at his side on the couch.

"You see she isn't in this house," she lied boldly. Her one thought was to keep the child at any cost, and to protect Gerard. Augusta stared around the room and turned away hopelessly.

"You see she isn't here," said Estelle, leading the way downstairs again.

Augusta made a last appeal; she fell to begging for the child, tragically, abjectly. But Estelle was rock. She remembered Gerard's illness, and the scandal his wife had brought down on him.

"I wonder you have the face to ask for Agnes," was all she answered to Augusta's pleading, "after your sister's treatment of Gerard."

Augusta Winters came close to Estelle and stood over her. She was tall, like her sister, and she overshadowed Estelle.

"You are a devil," she said heavily. "Myretta said you were, but we thought she was scared and exaggerated. There's only one comfort—it's not much of one to me—God will punish you. He'll pay you back worse than you've done to her, though I don't see how He can."

Then she went.

Estelle drew a long breath and went back upstairs. She was shaken by the interview, but perfectly sure she had done right. Gerard was awake when

she came in, and playing with the baby. "Look, Estelle, dear!" he said, with one of his old gay expressions, "she has exactly mother's smile! Smile, baby!"

He touched one sleep-colored cheek, and the baby dimpled at him. He was more natural and bright than he had been before.

Estelle bent and kissed them both, with tears standing in her eyes. She was certain now that she had done the only right thing. She said nothing to him about it for fear of exciting him.

But Myretta did die.

The old country minister from her village came to see Gerard and repeat Augusta's plea. But pneumonia works swiftly. Before Gerard could make arrangements to reach his mother and send Agnes with her to his wife, a telegram came from Augusta Winters.

"Myretta," the unforgiving oldest sister phrased the telegram, unheeding what her village might think of her, "killed by you last night."

She did not stop there. She did everything she could to make the tragic story public in Gerard's college town. The papers got the whole thing, and after the faculty had stemmed the scandal as best they could for a while, they asked for Gerard Stuart's resignation.

Gerard was still weak from his fever. The combined shock of Myretta's death, the blame he received for it, and the ruin of his career, broke him down again completely. The vividness of personality that made him so present in men's minds added force to the condemnation and anger they gave him now. And how much he had loved his quiet, worshiping girl wife, he had never known till now. Estelle was all that was left him out of the wreck, and he clung to her still.

They hurried him to the south of France with his sister and his baby. Estelle's income, fortunately, sufficed for all three.

Gerard improved gradually, the baby

flourished, and they definitely settled abroad. Presently he began to write a series of articles along the general line of his college work, which he had long planned and for which he had never found time. They succeeded, and by the end of the second year he was earning enough to support himself and the baby. This made him happier, but he was never quite what he had been before. He was always a very simple-minded, believing person, and from his babyhood he had lived in an enchanted land of friends and sunshine created for him by his own charm and lovingness. This was gone now, and the horror of it all had crippled his gayety.

He might have had a better chance to be courageously gay again, if it had not been that Estelle was practically his only companion, and recalled constantly and passionately his wrongs. It was too narrow a life not to be wearing. Little Agnes was his chief comfort. She worshiped her father. To Estelle she gave an instant, half-frightened obedience which placed her aunt unmistakably wrong in the eyes of strangers; the child's manner to her aunt was that of some one afraid of severity. Whereas there was never a baby more petted or indulged.

And so things went, a little shadowed, but peacefully, for some years. And then the heart which had been weakened by rheumatic fever suddenly stopped one day, while Gerard was talking and laughing with his sister.

It was in a measure the end of life for Estelle. Her hair turned gray that year, though she was not yet thirty, and she changed from a young woman to a middle-aged one. But she did not go home. The house where Gerard had spent his last years was more to her than her parents or her country. She lived on with little Agnes in the quiet French town, and made her house and her life a shrine to the memory of her brother.

She spent evening after evening with Agnes in her arms, sitting in the dusk, telling the passive child long stories about the adored father she had known such a little while. Often the little girl asked, timidly, the usual childish questions about her mother, but to no avail.

It was not a normal life for a child; perhaps that was why the merry little baby grew up a rather quiet girl, who had, besides a shy sweetness, a half-alarmed way which made strangers wonder if her bringing up was too strict. Though this was not true. Estelle only lived now to give her brother's daughter love and service.

It was Madame Meunier, the kindly, fussy wife of the principal *avocat*, the nearest friend Estelle had in the little French town, who shattered her belief in her absolute possession of Agnes. Estelle was making some bit of summer finery for her darling, and, late in the evening, found that she had not enough silk to finish it. She had promised it to Agnes for a picnic the next morning, and rather than disappoint her went down to the end of the street to see if Madame Meunier could lend her some.

"M'sieur the—how do you say—sweetheart, will like her in that, *hein?*?" beamed Madame Meunier innocently, when Estelle showed her the pretty colored *fichu* which had to be finished.

Estelle looked at her, horrified. Madame Meunier had spoken as if there really were a particular man in her mind. And so far as she herself knew, Agnes had never asked a man to the house, nor gone out with one! The girl was twenty, but Estelle, at her first timid suggestion, a year ago, that she would like to have a friend's brother allowed to come to see her, had forbidden it. "You are too young," she had told her niece lovingly. She did not want Agnes to have lovers yet.

However, Estelle betrayed nothing of her ignorance to her friend. She took

the silk home with her. Madame Meunier's last words rang in her mind hatefully.

"And every night at your house!" the good lady had beamed. "It is a beautiful devotion. And madame, his mother, Felicie tells me, is charmed with your little Agnes."

All this, so definite, so official—and Agnes had told her nothing! Every night at their house. Yes, Agnes used the parlor for studying, and Estelle always left her entirely alone till the studies were done. The servant must have known, too. Even the man's mother accepting Agnes as his fiancée, and she, Estelle, untold!

She could not understand it, but it hurt her terribly. Her own little girl whom she loved so, her little, docile, gentle Agnes, to deceive her in this way! And Agnes was too young to have any lover. Only twenty, twenty-five would be time enough—or more than that. Her Agnes!

The old tempestuousness caught and swept her home and up into Agnes' bedroom. The girl was asleep. Estelle bent over her and waked her, with something of the old passion, catching her by the shoulder.

"Agnes! Wake up!" she said. "What does this mean? Your having a lover!"

Agnes smiled sleepily for a moment, her father's very bright, loving smile; then, waking fully, drew away from her aunt frowning.

"It's true," she said. "He wanted to tell you, but I wouldn't let him."

Estelle's anger suddenly turned to grief alone. She was no longer strong enough to be angry long at a time.

"Oh, my darling, my own little girl, how could you be so cruel to the one who loves you best in the world?" she reproached, sinking down beside Agnes.

Agnes' face did not move or change. "Would you have been willing to let

it go on, if I had told you?" she demanded in a hard voice her aunt had never heard from her before.

"I only want you to be happy, you know that. I want you to marry in time—but I am older than you, and wiser. If he were all that you should marry, nothing would make me happier than to see you happier—" Estelle told her incoherently.

Agnes smiled, the mocking smile of a much older woman.

"He is very good and handsome and kind," she said. "I happened to know that he is the sort of man most mothers would be very glad to have for their daughters. At least, so Madame Briand tells me, and you know she thinks the angels are none too good for Lucille and me. You have seen him. It's Henry Estes, Armand Briand's friend. They were together at Oxford. You know Mrs. Estes, his mother, too."

"Oh, not that man!" cried Estelle before she thought, the old jealous instinct rising automatically. "I don't trust him, darling. Wait—"

"I knew you'd say that," said Agnes. "You'd say it of any man."

It was so true that Estelle did not answer.

"You don't love me!" she pleaded instead. "After all I have done for you—given up my whole life to you since your mother abandoned you—you don't love me!"

She did not really think that. She was certain of Agnes' love; the child had been like her daughter all her life. But she was appealing desperately to the girl's sympathies; and waited for her to lean close to her, melted by her appeal, as Gerard would have done.

Instead, Agnes sat up in bed where she was, a thin, dark braid over either shoulder, eying her aunt as if she were a stranger. There was a dreadful silence. Then Agnes spoke.

"That is true," she said judicially.

"I never did. I can never remember the time when I wanted to be near you, or touch you or talk to you. I have always felt that it was wicked of me, because, as you say, you have done everything for me. I suppose it is brutal of me to tell you the truth now. But I can't help it. I—I *want* to hurt you.

"I've hated you always, aunt Estelle, underneath, without knowing what it was. It hasn't been love, it's been terror and hate mixed that's always made me do what you said. I never knew about feelings till I came to love Harry. All I'd ever had was what I had for you. Their being alive enough to love him waked up all the hate I'd been icing over with forced affection for you. I don't know why I'm so wicked. I can't help it. I don't want to. I'm going to marry him in two weeks now. Then I shall go away and you'll never see me again, if I can help it. I knew

you'd try to separate me from any man I loved. And when I think of that I hate you so I could kill you. I wanted to kill you just now when you tried to tell me I mustn't marry him. I hate you so I don't think it would be safe for us to live together— Please go to bed now and leave me alone, aunt Estelle. You can't be enjoying this particularly."

She had her dead mother's very expression. She was, for the moment, that buried Myretta of twenty years back, Myretta armed with the Stuart eloquence and power. But Estelle did not see it. She was huddled down beside the bed, a little frail, gray, helpless, old woman, moaning in agony.

"Oh, dear Savior," she gasped between the terrible sobs that shook her, "dear Savior, why hast Thou let this undeserved blow come to me? Oh, dear Lord, dear Lord, *why?*"

Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of AINSLEE'S, published monthly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1920:

State of New York, County of New York, (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is Treasurer of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers of AINSLEE'S, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: *Publishers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *editor*, Helen L. Lieder, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *managing editors*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *business managers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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GEORGE C. SMITH, Treasurer,
of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22d day of September, 1920. Francis S. Duff, Notary Public, No. 239, New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1921.)

Ainslee's Book of the Month

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, by Stacy Aumonier;
The MacMillan Company, New York.

DEVOTEES of Stacy Aumonier who follow his short stories through current magazines will welcome his latest novel, "One After Another." It is ambitious in theme, staggering along under a quite complete philosophy of life, which the hero develops, and demonstrating the influence of heredity on the two main characters, yet withal rewarding completely the reader with the charm of the story.

The inevitable English "public house," this time "The Duchess of Pless," is the home of the story. Tom Purbeck and his sister, Laura, have as an indulgent parent, the proprietor. Tom, who tells the story, is characterized by one of his masters at Leydhurst, a private school for boys of the upper middle class to which his father sends him, as "merely a nice boy."

As Tom attends Leydhurst he acquires the habit of drawing social distinctions. "The Duchess of Pless" becomes a hotel for the benefit of his school fellows, and Purbeck, senior, is its lordly proprietor.

Laura studies violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London. As her horizon broadens through her music, she, too, puts behind "The Duchess" and takes rooms in town where her environment will be more conducive to study.

Tom, good-hearted and mild-tempered, marries the lady of his choice. With her he settles down to an eminently satisfactory and domestic life.

Laura progresses. She becomes a virtuoso. She tours Europe and Amer-

ica. Then, after a short, but brilliant career, she ends her life.

Of Laura, Tom says, "A girl with a temperament like Laura's can't be driven. She has to be humored and managed. She's partly angel and partly Bengal tigress.

"Father never understood her. He lacked imagination. His first mistake was when he married our mother. He fell in love with her, a pretty, dark, Spanish thing. He never had the imagination to see that she was different from him. Every trouble in the world is caused by this—lack of imagination."

Tom passes his own "important landmarks." But he is more subdued about it than Laura. Lacking the creative spirit, he expresses his feeling for art by painting stage scenes in a studio. Later he establishes an antique shop. He experiences the death of his wife, Mary, he brings up their daughter, "Midge," he marries again, successfully, and he is deeply influenced by the death of his father and of his sister, Laura.

As the story ends, Purbeck is writing a few sage reflections about life, for the benefit of his very young twin sons, Stephen and Roger. Doubtless what he writes is a bit substantial for their tender months, but all he is really telling them is, "You have always got to keep on the move, and to remember that life itself is only a temporary arrangement."

That is really the substance of "One After Another." One may be inclined to argue a bit with Tom Purbeck and his group of friends, however, it is a friendly argument; and there is a unanimous opinion that there is an entertaining story.

H. G.



In Broadway Playhouses

By Dorothy Parker

Laurels and Raspberries

IT is an uncomfortable thing to be at variance with the regular critics. There is a guilty feeling connected with it, as if one were admittedly at fault in not agreeing with them; surely, one thinks, as one cringes before their stern columns of impressive newspaper type, such neatly arranged and widely circulated opinions must be infallible. And yet what is there to do about it, when a play on which all the critics have turned down their thumbs in one beautifully simultaneous gesture, seems to one the best entertainment of the season? There is nothing left but to mutter sullenly that one may not know anything about art, but one knows what is perfectly great.

To dispense with some of the "one's," the case in point is "The Tavern," produced by George M. Cohan at his own theater. The piece was written originally by Miss Cora Dick Gantt, who, it is said, intended it in all seriousness as a melodrama of the romanticist school. And Mr. Cohan has taken that melodrama and burlesqued it, unmistakably even as, in "The Royal Vagabond," he burlesqued the merry-villager comic opera. The result is an evening to look back on for the remainder of a lifetime.

One—or at least, this one, which is what is usually meant by the person

employing the word—has long dreamed non-Freudian dreams of a burlesque, built of speeches and situations from all the particularly hair-raising productions that have gone before; Mr. Cohan has built his burlesque of these, and has done immeasurably more by adding those masterly touches which no other living playwright could add. "The Tavern" has all the immortal lines, from "You would not put even a dumb beast out on a night like this" to "It was you, you black-hearted snake, who made me the thing I am to-day." It has all the immortal characters—the vagabond stranger, unmistakably a gentleman beneath his patches, courtly of manner and swaggering of carriage, talking with whimsical philosophy of love and life; the half-witted hired man; the sturdy innkeeper; the blustering sheriff; His Excellency, the Governor; the incessantly swooning, wronged girl—all, all are there, the old familiar faces. It has all the immortal devices—the pistol which only the hero knows is not loaded; the tall clock on the stairs, which, though its hands remain ever stationary, ticks loudly in the more tense moments of the action; the howling storm, with the lightning politely yielding precedence to the thunder, and with the drenching rain from which all the characters emerge comfortably dry.

But it has much more, in those twists which no one but Mr. Cohan could conceive and no one but Mr. Cohan would dare to carry out. For example, the governor and his party wear clothes of the period around 1820, while the vagabond wears a conventional Chauncey Olcott costume dated about thirty years earlier, and the sheriff appears in modern Western attire. For instance, the wronged woman accuses not merely one man, but each male member of the cast, in turn, of being her betrayer. For added example, the sheriff looms up out of the storm carrying a wounded man, and later looms up again, carefully bearing in the same man.

No, there is no use in trying to report it; the typewriter's touch is too heavy. All one can do is to throw awe of the newspapers recklessly aside, and proclaim that here is an entertainment sent from heaven, via Mr. Cohan. See it for yourself, though you must come in from Jersey to do so; see Arnold Daly's gorgeous performance of the vagabond; see Spencer Charters as the hired man; see, in short, the whole company, under the tutelage of Mr. Cohan, show a melodrama how to take a joke. And if "The Tavern" is not running by the time this comes out, write to your congressman and demand its immediate revival.

Of course, the question arises, what does the authoress think of her masterpiece now that George Cohan has finished with it? It is fairly safe to predict that, should "The Tavern" not have the overwhelming success which it deserves, the first person to call Mr. Cohan's attention to the fact that she told him so, will be Miss Cora Dick Gantt. Certainly, the play could have received no more ponderous notices if it had been presented with all the seriousness that its loving author thought its due; some reviewers complained of the antiquity of its lines; one spoke quite harshly of the "injudicious dressing"

of one of the characters. Oh, well, it takes all sorts of people to make a world!

And now, I suppose we have to come down to the month's output of other playwrights. How naturally do all writers for the stage fall under those two headings—George M. Cohan and Other Playwrights!

If married men were never known to sway from the object of their legitimate devotion, it would, no doubt, detract greatly from the interest of married life, but it would be a big thing for the theatergoing public. Think how much suffering would have been spared the world if no one ever had had to sit through a drama dealing with the grotesquely clumsy attempts of a husband to indulge in a little offside diversion, and the invariably successful efforts of his wife to convince him that his place was in the home. What with the paper shortage and the fallibility of the human memory, it would be futile even to try to compile a list of the plays that have been based on this idea. Their name is, in a word, legion; the name of the latest is, in so many words, "Call the Doctor."

"Call the Doctor" had the distinction of officially opening the Empire Theater for the season. It was there produced with all his traditional prodigality by Mr. Belasco, the David Wark Griffith of the spoken drama. A highly trained cast, startlingly realistic sunlight effects, and stage settings done in unstinted chintz can, and inevitably do, accomplish much; yet even they cannot instill new life into this comedy. Its author, Jean Archibald, tells again the sweet, old story of the neglected wife who, acting under expert advice, makes her husband jealous, and thus brings his wandering affections back where they belong. The adviser, is in this instance, a young lady who makes a specialty of that sort of thing, calling herself a doctor of domestic difficulties; in this way,

you see, you can work back and get the title. At the doctor's instigation, the unpopular wife tears out the yoke and removes the nether flounce of her evening gown, which, naturally, attracts her husband's itinerant attention. Later, by means of French shoes, a curious, purple hat, a very badly simulated outburst of intoxication, and a markedly mediocre rendition of "You'd Be Surprised" on the piano, she drives him quite wild with renewed love for her, and everything ends as expected. The trouble is, that the husband's re-born infatuation is a little difficult to account for, as is almost always the case in such dramas; for the wife was decidedly more attractive in the first place.

Much of this story is told with a brightness of dialogue which is gently amusing, though not particularly true to life. All the characters speak entirely in epigrams during the sprightlier scenes; it gives rather the effect of their reading in rotation from a selection of the snappy sayings which fill up space at the ends of stories in the more highly sexed magazines. However, through this correspondence-school sophistication there runs a rich vein of hearthside sentiment, which will go big with the suburban trade. It is introduced by supplying the doctor with a heart interest of her own, and causing her admirer to declaim that she is too fine a woman to be working for a living, that woman's only profession is that of wife, and a number of such thoughts for the day, which used to be so widely syndicated back in the days of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee.

The rôle of the doctor is played with skillful ease by Janet Beecher, and Philip Merivale somehow manages to make the part of her suitor an attractive one, a feat which may assuredly be classed as art. William Morris is the husband, while the lady he almost leaves home for is played by Jane Houston,

who contributes what a euphemist would call a remarkable bit of song to the second act. Of Charlotte Walker as the wife, perhaps the gentlest thing to do is to say that she is hopelessly out of her element, and to try to forget. Fania Marinoff, in the entirely extraneous rôle of a Hungarian portrait painter, and Rea Martin, as an amusing maid, complete the costly cast.

Again the neglected wife receives the full glare of the spotlight, this time in "The Woman of Bronze," which Paul Kester adapted from the French of Henri Kistermaecker. It was Henri Kistermaecker, it will doubtless not be remembered, who wrote the original version of the shell-riddled war drama, "Where Poppies Bloom."

The wife, in this instance, does not resort to the wearing of trick shoes or the singing of "You'd Be Surprised;" instead, she sobs and swoons and shouts and goes on little better than regardless. However, her husband's tendencies are much more pronounced than are those of the husband in "Call the Doctor;" indeed, in "The Woman of Bronze," things have reached the "No-no-my-God-not-that" stage. But then, this husband is a sculptor, you see, and so his carryings-on are no surprise to the audience.

It would, perhaps, be less interesting had this wife pursued the make-him-jealous course, but it would have resulted in a far more restful evening for both Margaret Anglin and the audience. So recklessly does she hurl herself into the rôle that the audience is carried far away. The wife's woes become their woes; they are tortured and harrowed and soul-racked right along with her. The end of the big scene finds them worn and haggard, their faces striped with bitter tears. Miss Anglin's acting could receive no prettier compliment; given a less vital performance of the rôle, and no audience would care, one way or the other, what happened to that

woman. Indeed, were it to be played by any one of a horde of heavily salaried actresses that flocks to mind, one could readily foresee that the spectators would rise en masse and give three rousing cheers for the husband when he left with the other woman. As it is, not until one is far from the Frazee Theater can one divorce the acting from the play, and realize what a colossal lot of tosh the drama really is.

John Halliday is requisitely contemptible as the husband, and Mary Fowler is an engaging other woman. In fact, the cast is an unusually good one; Miss Anglin is admirably supported.

Next to the play of wifehood triumphant, the psychic drama is ever dear to the hearts of the populace. The most recent along this line is "One," by Edward Knoblock, carefully produced at the Belasco Theater. The plot concerns twin sisters, who have but one soul between them. The sisters have, also, but one actress between them, for Frances Starr, by rapidly changing her costume, plays both parts. And it is her sympathetic performance of the rôles that keeps the audience from enjoying a hearty laugh, for without her, the play, honorable though its intention may be, would come dangerously close to burlesque. The sisters are able to communicate with each other, the author explains, even though the Atlantic lies between them; and one can readily believe this, for Miss Starr, when communing with whichever sister she is not impersonating at the time, employs a tone of voice which would easily carry from Liverpool to Sandy Hook. The end is, as you have guessed, the death of one of the sisters, whose half soul is immediately inherited by the surviving twin, giving her the normal quota.

Mr. Belasco, in a note in the program, announces that "One" is "a play of immateriality transmuted into terms of the real through the medium of the theater." Well, yes and no.

Quite a bevy of innocuous little comedies is now in our midst; if you have visiting relatives stopping with you, you can find any number of suitably immaculate plays, to provide diversion for them. The foremost of the group is Ian Hay's "Happy-Go-Lucky," which ran in London under the more interesting title of "Tilly of Bloomsbury;" the management doubtless changed the name from the legitimate fear that their customers might think Bloomsbury was some place reached by the Erie Railroad. The piece itself is only lukewarm, but it provides a delightful character, delightfully acted by O. P. Heggie, and it is cleverly interpreted by an English company. Mr. A. H. Woods, the father of the bedroom farce, has for the time being sternly inhibited beds and produced "Happy-Go-Lucky" admirably, with particular regard to the home of a Bloomsbury family.

"Little Old New York," by Rida Johnson Young, though pretty fairly sweet and not a little bit quaint, is saved by the humor of Donald Meek and the freshness of Genevieve Tobin. It presents an amusing series of pictures of the New York of 1810, in the days when Peter Delmonico was selling sandwiches and Cornelius Vanderbilt was getting along nicely with his Staten Island ferry; but, as in all such plays, local color substitutes for plot.

"The Guest of Honor," by William Hodge, starring William Hodge, is, as is only natural, a typical William Hodge play. It is full of simple kindness and homely philosophy and nasal utterances, and the action centers around a little golden-haired tot—one might almost call him a kiddie—who goes about asking people, "What does Dod do wiv the old moon?" Mr. Hodge plays with his accustomed ease, even carrying the thing so far as to repeat many of his lines with his eyes shut; and in a pretty spirit of reciprocity, many members of the audi-

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ence sit through most of the play with their eyes shut.

"Welcome Stranger," the new Aaron Hoffman comedy at the Cohan and Harris, is heroically rescued from dullness by the work of George Sidney, in the rôle of the Semitic shopkeeper who sets up business in a New England town, and conquers its long-standing race prejudice in three acts. It is one of those shows where everybody is mean and narrow in the first act, and rich and broad-minded in the last; and the usual hokum is invoked in the transition. Were it not for the wholly delightful performance of Mr. Sidney's, and the fact that any pro-Jewish play is always lavishly patronized by the patriotic local audiences, "Welcome, Stranger" would have a decidedly thin time of it.

There are much pleasanter things to say of "The Bad Man," at the Comedy Theater. Porter Emerson Browne's comedy of a benevolent Mexican bandit offers an evening of continuous amusement, thanks no more to Mr. Browne than to Holbrook Blinn, who plays the title rôle. The sincerest tribute which can be paid it is that even the loud revolver shots, necessitated by the action, cannot spoil the evening; only those who, like the present writer, are congenitally gun shy, can appreciate the full force of this compliment.

The new "Greenwich Village Follies" are a curious compound of beautiful stage pictures and blood-curdling comedy scenes. Unfortunately, the former do not make up for the latter. Not even the gorgeous "Song of the Samovar" number can compensate one for the imitations rendered by Venita Gould, or the charming ballet of perfume for the vaudeville specialties done by Sylvia Clark. There is Margaret Severn's exquisite dancing, but then there is the act loudly done by the team of Myers and Hanford; there is the charming valentine song, but, again, there is Frank Crumit. True, Savoy and Brennen are present, yet somehow they seem a shade less funny than of yore. Perhaps the greatest comedy effect of the evening is achieved by the lyricist who rhymes "comedy" with "artistry," and "piano" with "Katzenjammer." Mr. John Murray Anderson, who planned and staged the production, has devised an enchanting entertainment, speaking entirely from the optical standpoint. But to attend the "Greenwich Village Follies" is to realize anew how rare and how blessed is good comedy.

Which brings us right back to the place we started, and forces us to repeat with redoubled emphasis that "The Tavern" is the event of the year.

There's something about getting back to "the old crowd" that's comforting and even when things are "dead wrong," reassuring. They know you and your ways. Charles Hanson Towne has written a good tale for AINSLEE'S with real New York atmosphere. Watch for "The Old Crowd."

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

JUDGING from the letters which we receive daily, asking for more of this author, more of this kind of story, we feel that AINSLEE's has created a demand for the very best there is in storytelling. With the coming of fall and winter, when evenings are longer and less cumbered by frivolous indulgence, the taste for reading becomes more acute, more discerning, less haphazard. You are demanding "meat," and we know it, and we have, therefore, in preparation some of the best and strongest numbers of AINSLEE's yet. Take, for instance, the January number. It is the special holiday number, devoted to Christmas, and there are in it stories unique not only for their authorship, but for their substance.

TALKED ABOUT," the complete novelette, is by Katharine Hill, and it has all the verve and charm that this author's work has inevitably. Beatrice Cowdrey, a young daughter of the rich, has always done as she pleases, with regard for neither form nor favor. And, quite naturally, she has been "talked about." After many not very soul-searing love affairs she marks for conquest the scion of an old and honorable and affluent house. Man-fashion, he likes her glamour. But he sees in marrying her an element of risk. Is the game for him worth the candle? Read "Talked About" and find out for yourself.

IDEALS, somehow, have a way of getting in the way of love affairs. They assert themselves just when they might more comfortably be forgotten. One may ride over them, of course, but the going thereafter is apt to be rather uneven. Margaret Pedler, the well-known English writer, has written a charming

tale with a Christmas setting around this question and the love of two women for one man. You'll be interested in the ways they loved him, and "Akin to Love" in the January AINSLEE's will tell you.

MARIE VAN VORST'S next tale in the series about a certain society group on Long Island has, opportunely, a gay Christmas setting as well as a captivating heroine, a romantic hero, and—"another woman." "The Girl Who Was Staying in the House" is arresting from the first paragraph. You'll like the girl and you won't, curiously, dislike "the other woman." "There's Corn in Egypt" is the intriguing title of Achmed Abdullah's contribution to the January AINSLEE's. Nightly they played cards together, two New York clubmen, and they won and lost, each with good sportsmanship. But somewhere in the past there had been a woman, and because one had lost and the other had won that particular game, we have a story absorbing in its interest. Margaret Belle Houston has a bright and lively Christmas tale with a Western flavor in the holiday number of AINSLEE's called "The Coming of Silky." Also, Gene Markey's next "Monty Sims" tale, called "The Crazy Man," and quite as laugh-provoking as the "Monty" story in this issue, will appear next time.

THESE are but a few of the outstandingly good stories in the January AINSLEE's. There are others. And, besides, there is a quantity of distinctive verse by well-known poets. This number of AINSLEE's will be in demand. Be assured of your copy by placing your order now.

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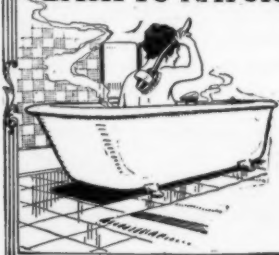
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation | <input type="checkbox"/> Penitry Raising |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> French |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian |

Name _____
 Present Occupation _____ 7-25-19
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 City _____ State _____



Deformities of the Back

Thousands of Remarkable Cases

An old lady, 72 years of age, who suffered for many years and was absolutely helpless, found relief. A man who was helpless, unable to rise from his chair, was riding horseback and playing tennis within a year. A little child, paralyzed, was playing about the house after wearing a Philo Burt Appliance three weeks. We have successfully treated more than 40,000 cases the past 19 years.

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Stops Hair Coming Out;
Doubles Its Beauty.



A few cents buys "Danderine." After an application of "Danderine" you can not find a fallen hair or any dandruff, besides every hair shows new life, vigor, brightness, more color and thickness.

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JUST send your name and address for our 128-page Christmas book of bargains in diamonds, watches and jewelry. Millions of dollars worth of jewelry from which to choose your Xmas gifts. Your selection sent on your simple request, without a penny down. If you don't think it is the biggest bargain you have ever seen, send it back at our expense. If you keep it you can pay at the rate of only a few cents a day.

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You are guaranteed an 8% yearly increase in value on all diamond exchanges. Also 5% bonus privileges.

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HERE in this one-horse town—at night—they stood before the judge—arrested—she an heiress, promised to a big politician—he, the man beside her, not her fiancé—

Why did they lie? Why did they hide their true names? Find out the amazing sentence the judge pronounced upon them. The startling outcome of it all makes a big story. Read it. It's told by

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

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Whether it be the blinding heat of an African desert—a lone-some island in the Pacific, or the deep mystery of a London fog—Davis always had a breathless story to tell. He knew that Romance was not dead. No man ever visited so many strange lands or saw so many wars in so many different places. He was at the Boer War—he was in Cuba—he saw the Russo-Japanese War—he was in Mexico—he was in the Great War. More than ever before Americans love him. His heart flamed against cruelty and injustice—he typifies the spirit with which America went to war.

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You must act quickly. How long you can have these books at the present low price we do not know—the cost of paper and cloth is going higher every day. When the present edition runs out we will have to add the extra cost of paper to the price. Make sure of your splendid set at the little price. Mail the coupon today. Forget the monotony—the dullness of everyday life. Go with him into the land of romance.

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Send me, all charges prepaid, complete set of Richard Harding Davis, in 12 volumes. Also send absolutely FREE the set of Gouverneur Morris, in 4 volumes. If these books are not satisfactory I will return both sets, within 10 days, at your expense. Otherwise I will send you \$1.00 at once and \$2.00 a month for 13 months. For cash deduct 10%.

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Relief from irritating coughs and colds and sore scratchy throats is only an arm's length away when Piso's is kept on your shelf. Buy Piso's today, then you will have it always handy as a protection. Good for young and old. It contains no opiate.

35c at your druggist's

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"They WORK
while you sleep"



Best Laxative for Men,
Women and Children.
10, 25, 50c—drugstores.

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A Big Raise in Salary!

Is Very Easy to Get, If You Go About It in the Right Way

You have often heard of others who have doubled and trebled their salaries in a year's time. You wondered how they did it. Was it a pull? Don't you think it. When a man is hired he gets paid for exactly what he does, there is no sentiment in business. It's preparing for the future and knowing what to do at the right time that doubles and trebles salaries.

Remember When You Were a Kid

and tried to ride a bike for the very first time? You thought that you would never learn and then—all of a sudden you knew how, and said in surprise: "Why it's a cinch if you know how." It's that way with most things, and getting a job with big money is no exception to the rule, if you know how.

We Will Show You How

Without loss to you of a single working hour we can show you a sure way to success and big pay. A large number of men in each of the positions listed are enjoying their salaries because of our help—we want to help you.

Make check on the coupon against the job you want and we will help you to get it. Write or print your name on the coupon and send it in today.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CORRESPONDENCE
Dept. G-84 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U. S. A.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CORRESPONDENCE, Dept. G-84:

Chicago, U. S. A.

I want job checked — tell me how to get it.

... Architect \$5,000 to \$15,000
... Building Contractor \$5,000 to \$10,000
... Automobile Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000
... Automobile Repairman \$2,500 to \$4,000
... Civil Engineer \$5,000 to \$15,000
... Structural Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000
... Business Manager \$5,000 to \$15,000
... Certified Public Accountant \$7,000 to \$15,000
... Accountant and Auditor \$2,500 to \$7,000
... Draftsman and Designer \$2,500 to \$4,000
... Electrical Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000
... General Education In one year

... Lawyer \$5,000 to \$15,000
... Mechanical Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000
... Shop Superintendent \$3,000 to \$7,000
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... Sanitary Engineer \$2,000 to \$5,000
... Telephone Engineer \$2,500 to \$5,000
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... High School Graduate In two years
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Ten Months to Pay the Royal Way

Don't worry about the ready money. Buy her a Diamond now and pay only 20% down and balance in ten equal monthly payments. No money in advance. Make first payment only when article is accepted.

Royal Diamonds Guaranteed

Perfect cut, brilliant, blue-white stones—every one covered with an iron-clad guarantee and an exchange privilege at full purchase price. You can't go wrong on a Royal Diamond. "If it's a Royal, it's a Gem."

Send for Free New Catalog (Edition 226)

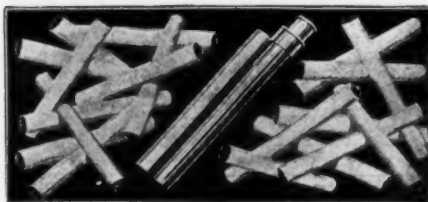
To avoid the Christmas rush, write today. Ask for 96 page catalog No. 226. It describes and illustrates our many wonderful values and beautiful Gifts in Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, Ivory and Silverware, etc.

Tells exactly how to get our easy, cheerful credit. Make her happy with a "Royal" Diamond for Christmas. Liberty Bonds accepted.

10% discount allowed for cash.

Illustrations in this advertisement are reduced in size about one half.

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A Practical Novelty for Cigarette Smokers

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Two wonderful Sequoia Brand Flannel Shirts only \$3.69. Direct from factory. No Middlemen's profit. Would cost \$6.00 or more elsewhere. Perfectly tailored. Cut extra full. Comfortable fitting. Winter weight. Soft turn down collar. Two extra strong, large pockets. Double stitched throughout. Thoroughly shrunk. For work or semi-dress. An amazing bargain. Send no money. Pay postage only \$1.00 plus

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La Rose's Eyebright is a scientific, harmless preparation that should be on the dressing table of every man and woman. It will brighten and clear with the most tired and irritated eyes, bringing back the sparkle and fascination that bright, healthy eyes alone possess.

Give Your Eyes a Chance to Be Beautiful!

Nature intended your eyes to be clear and beautiful. They are the "windows of the soul." But very few people are wise enough to give their eyes the attention they demand. That, more than any other reason, is why twenty million Americans wear glasses. You might avoid glasses for many years to come by keeping your eyes clear and clear with La Rose's "Eyebright." An absolutely harmless and scientific preparation made purposely for tired and irritated eyes.

Send Today for Bottle

Send \$1.00 for a bottle of "Eyebright." Use it five days. At the end of that time you will find your eyes have been magically refreshed and brightened. They will look better and they will feel better. If they do not we want you to send back the remainder of the bottle and we will cheerfully and immediately refund your money. This is our guarantee that you must be satisfied.

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WITHOUT JOBBER'S,
RETAILER'S OR STORE'S
COSTS AND PROFITS
BEING ADDED TO PRICE,
THUS SAVING YOU
AT LEAST 30%

Our capacity at present is 3,000 pairs per day, producing only one type and one style of product, which allows efficient buying, operating and distributing. We know our own product and take no risk in inviting you to send it back if you don't like it. Dark Mahogany Leather, Goodyear Welt Sole of Heavy Natural Grain Oak, Extra Quality Heavy Duck Lining, Wingfoot Rubber Heel.

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Postpaid.

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Just to advertise our famous Hawaiian im. diamonds—the greatest discovery the world has ever known. We will send absolutely free this 14k gold f. ring, set with a 1-24 H.W. 14k im. diamond—in beautiful ring box postage paid. Pay postmaster \$1.50 C. O. D. charges to cover postage, boxing, advertising, handling, etc. If you can tell it from a real diamond return and money refunded. Only 10,000 given away. Send no money. Answer quick. Send size of finger.

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Quick Results secured by simple method at home. Your success guaranteed under cash bond. Write for free book. PERFECT VOICE INSTITUTE, Studio 9655, 1922 Sunnyside Ave., Chicago, Ill.

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A pleasantly written booklet for those near or past middle life. It concerns a simple, drugless treatment that cannot interfere with daily work or doctor's care. It has delighted thousands, is prescribed by hundreds of physicians, chiropractors, osteopaths, physical culturists, etc. Used and endorsed by intelligent laymen all over the world. Not a book about infectious disease but wholesome truth. Just say: Send me, free of all charge,

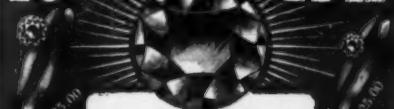
"PROSTATOLGY"

If depressed in spirit; if backache, sciatica, or tender feet annoy you; if nerves are gone, if bladder weakness and disturbed slumber undermine your health, you will bless this book. Do it before you forget where you saw this notice.

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Every article shown a special value, every diamond genuine, blue-whites perfect cut. Your choice ON APPROVAL. NO MONEY IN ADVANCE. Pay one-fifth after examination, balance in ten payments. SWEET'S Policy: You must be satisfied or no sale. PROFIT-SHARING PLAN: 7½% yearly increase in exchange value on our diamonds.

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Send for catalogue of precious gems, jewelry, watches, gifts, etc. The lowest prices—the highest quality. Ten months to pay on everything. Address Dept. 98 T.

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I know because I was Deaf and had Head Noises for over 20 years. My invariable Antiseptic Ear Drops restored my hearing and stopped Head Noises, and will do it for you. They are Tiny Megaphones. Cannot be seen when worn. Effective when Deafness is caused by Catarrh or by Perforated, Partially or Wholly Destroyed Natural Drums. Easy to put in, easy to take out. Are "Usphen Comforsa." Inexpensive. Write for Booklet and my own statement of how I recovered my hearing.

A. O. LEONARD

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Try This Gas Saving Test



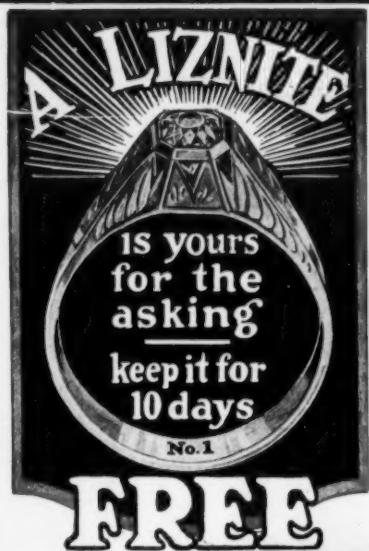
As your old gas mantles break, put on indestructible Usalyte or Lotolyt Mantles and watch your gas bills go down. They are unbreakable and save one-third the gas besides.

USALYTE LOTOLYT Gas Mantles

In the Square Box with In the Distinctive Blue Label—101 Triangular Box—201

Remember the Names—Take No Substitute

Usalyte sold at West- 71. ROBIN & SONS INC. 130 W. St. and Park Ave. New York. Manufacturers of the Wonderful Usalyte Gas Mantles.



So perfect—so dazzling—so exactly like a high-priced diamond is this beautiful LIZNITE GEM RING that it is next to impossible to tell the difference. It withstands fire, acid and file tests the same as the finest diamond. Get it today and be the envy of your friends.

The No. 1 Ring, above, is full carat weight genuine LIZNITE GEM, extra heavy, handsomely engraved, solid gold ring. Mounting is white gold top, yellow gold shank. Priced at \$21.50. And net a penny until the ring arrives.

SEE IT AND WEAR IT AT OUR RISK

This ring or any one of the four others shown here sent immediately on request. The sparkling pure white beauty of genuine LIZNITE GEMS and the exquisite, guaranteed solid gold mountings of these rings surpass anything of the kind you have ever before seen or read about. See for yourself and be convinced.

10 DAYS IN WHICH TO DECIDE

The attached Coupon—a letter—or card brings the ring today. Right now while you think of it, send us your name and address. The Return Mail will bring you whichever one of these LIZNITE GEM RINGS you make select. No other gift you can make yourself or friend will mean half so much.

Finger Size

Measure the length of a strip of paper that just passes over the second joint of finger on which you want to wear the ring. Be sure to include this measure.

TERMS ON ALL LIZNITE GEM RINGS

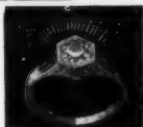
\$4.50 when ring arrives. \$3.00 Monthly until balance is paid. Your money cheerfully refunded any time inside of 10 days if you return the ring.

THE LIZNITE GEM COMPANY
128 S. Wells Street, Chicago, Illinois

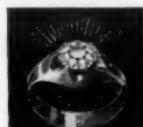
MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY
The Lixnite Gem Company, Dept. 230

Kindly send me prepaid on your 10 DAY FREE INSPECTION PLAN Ring No. 1. When Ring arrives I agree to pay \$4.50 and after 10 days, either return the ring or forward \$3.00 monthly until paid for. In case I return the Ring you will refund the \$4.50 at once. My finger size is.....

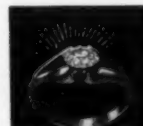
Name
Address



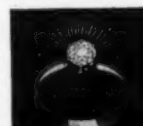
No. 1. Lady's Solid Gold, full carat weight, genuine LIZNITE GEM; white gold top, yellow gold shank, hand engraved. Only \$17.50.



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No. 3. Solid Gold, Tooth Belcher Ring, hand made mounting set with genuine, full carat weight LIZNITE GEM. Only \$15.50.



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Colonel Roosevelt said:

I did a lot of reading. I particularly enjoyed half a dozen rattling good detective stories.

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It was a regular detective story, and I adore detective stories with all the fervor I have left in me to ferve. My favorite magazine is a red and yellow one called the **Detective Story Magazine**.

If You Do Like Detective and Mystery Stories why not read the magazine that makes a specialty of them, the only magazine of its kind. It prints the very best detective and mystery stories by the very best authors.

THIS MAGAZINE IS

DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

Issued Every Saturday. 15c a Copy

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We offer exceptional values in Diamond Rings, Solitaires and Clusters, latest popular plain and fancy engraved mountings. The Diamonds are magnificent gems, set in White, Green or Yellow Solid Gold. Featured in Catalog. Special at **\$85, \$125, \$150, \$200, \$250 and up**

CREDIT TERMS on purchases of \$5 or over, one-fifth down, balance in eight equal amounts, payable monthly.

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The easiest, most convenient way to make handsome, worthwhile presents is to send for our Catalog, make selections in the quiet of your own home, and have as many articles as you wish charged in **one account**. We prepay shipping charges. Satisfaction guaranteed or money promptly refunded. Send for Catalog Today. **Liberty Bonds Accepted.**

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Made of genuine leather in gun metal, popular black and blue style. Comfortable, substantial, long wearing, genuine leather soles—reinforced black and



Has military heel. Best workmanship. Black only. Sizes, 6 to 11. Pay only **\$3.98** for shoes on arrival. If you don't find them the greatest shoe bargain, return them and back goes your money. No obligation, no risk to you. But you must send at once to be sure of getting them. A sale like this only sells the stock.

SEND NOW Just your request. No money now. Wait until they come. We ship them at once. Keep them only if satisfactory. Be sure to give size and width and order by No. **AX151806**. Send now while sale is on. Get your order in the mail today.

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A Better Job Will Bring It to You

There are far more good jobs than there are men qualified to fill them. You want to get ahead—you want to be a somebody. You want a bigger income—more pleasing surroundings—more latitude to grow. You can have these things. We will help you get them.

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You can qualify for it in your spare time. No need to give up your present work. A few of the hours you now waste will, if spent in study of any one of our courses, fit you to take on a real job and hold it down. There is nothing reasonable you can't accomplish if you make up your mind to win and

Make Your Idle Hours Count

Our courses are planned and supervised by leading educators—men who know the subject they are teaching and how to tell you about it in plain, understandable English. Under their direction it is simple—easy to master. Let us send you, free, copy of our latest bulletin. Fill out the coupon below, mark the course or courses that interest you, mail it to us today. Make this start now. You'll never regret it. Every day you put it off takes just that much away from a splendid future.

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Dept. G 84, Drexel Ave. and 58th St., Chicago, U. S. A.

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Sincerely yours,
Albert Bielke


American School of Correspondence,

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Explain how I can qualify for positions checked.

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.....Automobile Engineer.	\$4,000 to \$10,000Shop Superintendent.	\$3,000 to \$7,000
.....Automobile Repairman.	\$2,500 to \$4,000Employment Manager.	\$3,000 to \$10,000
.....Civil Engineer.	\$5,000 to \$15,000	.....Steam Engineer.	\$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Structural Engineer.	\$4,000 to \$10,000	.....Foreman.	\$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Business Manager.	\$5,000 to \$15,000	.....Photoplay Writer.	\$2,000 to \$10,000
.....Certified Public Accountant.	\$7,000 to \$15,000	.....Sanitary Engineer.	\$3,000 to \$10,000
.....Accountant and Auditor.	\$2,500 to \$7,000	.....Telephone Engineer.	\$2,000 to \$5,000
.....Draftsman and Designer.	\$2,500 to \$4,000	.....Telegraph Engineer.	\$2,500 to \$5,000
.....Electrical Engineer.	\$4,000 to \$10,000	.....High School Graduate.	In two years.
.....General Education.	In one year.Fire Insurance Expert.	\$2,000 to \$10,000

Name..... Address.....



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Deans have just the necessary menthol to make breathing easy—relieve irritation. Nose and throat specialists use menthol as a healing agent. Deans are as carefully compounded as a prescription. Instant relief. Pleasant, safe, sure. At your nearest dealer.

DEANS

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"DON'T SHOUT"

"I can hear you with the MORLEY PHONE." It is invisible, weightless, comfortable, inexpensive. No metal, wires nor rubber. Can be used by anyone, young or old. The Morley Phone for the

DEAF

is to the ears what glasses are to the eyes. Write for Free Booklet containing testimonials of users all over the country. It describes causes of deafness; tells how and why the MORLEY PHONE affords relief. Over one hundred thousand sold.

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ATWIST OF THE WRIST

USALYTE, the extraordinary heater, and makes early rising a pleasure. Your room is flooded with heat almost instantly by a mere twist of the wrist!

Usalyte is an absolutely new, safe, quick and cheap means of using gas for heating purposes. It will pay for itself a dozen times over, the first season, by the cost it saves.

In two styles: for heating only or, with the new and exclusive in-built mantle, for heating and lighting.

For heating only, \$1.75
For heating and lighting, \$2.25

Order from your dealer or direct from us. Take no interior substitutes.

Dept. 50

J. L. ROBIN & SONS Inc.
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6000 MILES GUARANTEE

Our double tread reconstructed tires save you time, energy and money and do away with tire troubles. Our tires cannot be compared with ordinary double tread or triple fabric tires of inferior make. Our reputation and success is due to the fact that we spare no time or money to make our tires excel in quality and durability. Our tires are used from Coast to Coast. Ask your banker about us. **Rebuilt Free with every tire. Tubes are guaranteed tread stock.**

Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
30x3	\$6.00	\$1.75	32x4	\$8.75	\$2.50	36x4½	\$12.00	\$3.40
30x3½	7.00	2.00	32x4	9.00	2.75	36x5	15.00	3.60
31x3½	7.25	2.10	34x4	9.25	2.85	36x5	15.25	3.70
32x3½	7.50	2.25	34x4½	10.50	3.00	37x5	15.50	3.75
31x4	8.50	2.50	35x4½	11.50	3.15			

Send \$2 deposit for each tire and \$1 for each tube ordered, balance C. O. D. Tires shipped subject to your examination. State whether S. S., C. L. (Q. D.) plain or N. B. is desired. All same price.

NATIONAL GOOD-WEAR TIRE CO., 1115 Washington Blvd., Dept. 245, CHICAGO

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Take Tablets without Fear if you see the "Bayer Cross"

For Headache
Pain, Colds
Neuralgia
Toothache
Earache
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Rheumatism



Insist upon a
"Bayer package,"
which contains
safe, proper
Directions.
Proved safe by
millions.

Bayer-Tablets of Aspirin

"Bayer" introduced Aspirin to physicians 20 years ago.

Handy tin boxes of 12 tablets cost but a few cents—Larger packages.
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FREE
FOR 10 DAYS' WEAR

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BROOKS' APPLIANCE, the modern scientific invention, the wonderful new discovery that relieves rupture will be sent on trial. No obnoxious springs or pads. Has automatic Air Cushions. Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No lies. Durable, cheap. Sent on trial to prove it. Protected by U. S. patents. Catalogue and measure blank mailed free. Send name and address today.

Brooks Appliances Co., 212 D State St., Marshall, Mich.

Just Send Your Name

Send your name and we will send you a Rosebrite prepaid right to your home free for 10 days' wear. This wonderful new gem has all the sparkling fire and dazzling beauty of the finest genuine diamonds. Cut and polished, absolutely flawless, just like the most costly diamonds. It's diamond-like brilliancy lasts forever. Even experts can scarcely tell it from the genuine. Mounted in beautiful solid gold ring, men's or women's style.

Send No Money

Just write us today stating style wanted and finger size. (To determine size, roll strip of paper just long enough to meet over second joint of ring finger.) This is all you do—send not a penny in cash. When ring arrives, deposit only \$4.75 with the postman. Wear it 10 days. If you or your friends can tell it from a diamond send it back and we will refund the deposit. If you decide to keep it, merely send \$1 a month for four months. Remember you take no risk whatever—you must be delightfully pleased with this wonderful new brilliant stone. Write today before this special introductory cut-price offer is withdrawn.

Rosebrite Diamond Company

Dept. 4412, 30 N. Dearborn St. Chicago, Illinois

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MEN are wanted by the government, police departments, corporations, banks, institutions and individuals—these men must be trained Finger Print Men—men who have made this work a profession.

Big Salaries

and big rewards go to these experts because they solve mysteries that baffle the most experienced ordinary detectives. The finger print clew is one that cannot fail because no two people in the whole world make the same mark.

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in mastering this fascinating, big money-making profession by studying in your spare time at home. Common school education is all you need. A brilliant career is before you. Finger Print Experts travel everywhere, see the country, live in the best hotels and have all expenses paid. There is a crying need for such men right now. This profession is not crowded. Get started at once—right now—and be one of the *big men* in the field. Get our free book today.

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Tells you all about finger prints—the big opportunities in this profession, and everything you want to know about it. Send the coupon now.

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Set in Solid Gold **Set in Solid Gold**

Send Us Your Name and We'll Send You a Lachnite

DON'T send a penny. Just say: "Send me a Lachnite mounted in a solid gold ring on 10 day a free trial." We will mail it prepaid definite to you. When it comes merely deposit \$4.95 with the postman and wear the ring for 10 full days. If you, or any of your friends can tell from a glance, send it back and we will return your deposit. But if you decide to buy it—send us \$2.50 a month until \$19.75 has been paid.

Write Today Send your name now. Tell us which of these solid gold rings you wish (either or both). Be sure to send your street also.

Hargis Lachman Co., 204 So. Peoria St., Dept. 1925, Chicago.

REAL \$35 VALUE **Only \$15**

23 Jewels Full 12 Size 20 Year Gold Filled

BARGAIN OF A LIFETIME! Guaranteed perfect timekeeper. Tined, adjusted, regulated. Sold on 30 days' trial. **SEND ORDER FOR W137**

14K SOLID GOLD **Only \$15.00**

REAL \$35 VALUE

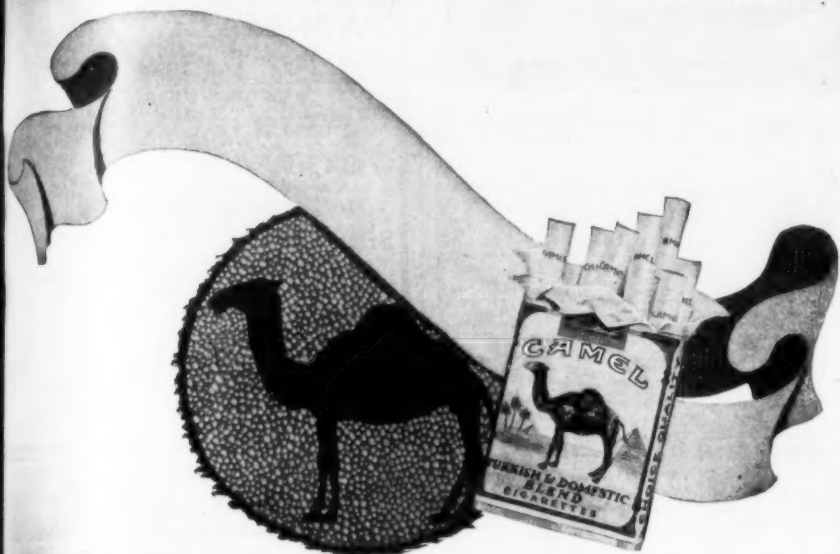
Juwelled, adjusted, regulated **Includes solid gold bracelet. Sold on 30 days' trial. Guaranteed perfect timekeeper. Gift case free. W137.**

SEND FOR NEW BARGAIN CATALOG—Full of surprises in diamonds, watches and jewelry. This 132 page bargain book will save you up to 100%. Thousands of selections shown. **B. GUTTER & SONS, 172 Nassau St., Division 137, New York, N.Y.**

\$65 VALUE

R137

Dazzling, brilliant blue-white diamond in exquisite 14K Solid White Gold Ring. Looks like platinum. Wonderful bargain. Gift case free. Sold on 30 Days' Free Trial \$33



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Camels offer you!*

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Unequalled quality — a really wonderful blend of choice Turkish and choice Domestic tobaccos—a flavor as distinctive and refreshing as it is appetizing—smooth mellow mildness never before attained in a cigarette—freedom from any unpleasant cigaretty odor!

And, when you compare Camels with any cigarette in the world at any price, you will note that *Camels never tire your taste*, no matter how liberally you smoke!

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CIGARETTES

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I CAN HELP YOU-

IF I CAN PUT
INTO YOUR HANDS
THIS BOOK ON

STRONGFORTISM

Is Your Wife Proud of You?

Does she look upon you in admiration as her ideal physically and mentally? Does she compare you with other men and see in you the noblest of them all? Or does she see in you a frail, hesitating, discouraged individual for whom she is sorry—a weakling she has to jolly and coax and prod to go to work and make a man of himself? Are you languid, tired out, disinclined to go out into the world and make a light for a place for yourself and go family? Are you afraid to go into social circles where both sexes mingle and enjoy themselves? Or are you a croaker and a grouchy, grumpy codd whom nobody wants around?

Are You to Blame?

You may not be wholly to blame for being dumpy, grouchy, disheartened if you feel all off when you rise in the morning and feel languid and sluggish all day; but you should be blamed if you permit such a condition of the body and mind to ruin your whole life and the lives of those about you without making an effort to throw off the monsters—disease and ill-health—when I stand ready to help you in a way that no other man in the world can help you—when I offer to place within your grasp a system of self-cure of rehabilitation, upbuilding and strengthening, that is leading the way in making better men, happier men out of thousands who had counted themselves failures.

You only are to blame if you refuse to listen to the advice of the man who first made of himself the most perfect specimen of manhood in the world and who now extends his hand to you and offers to point the way to health, strength, happiness and hopefulness.



STRONGFORT
The Perfect Man

STRONGFORTISM Is a Science in Itself

It is years ahead of any health-building course. It makes men new. It awakens slumbering ambition. It puts pep into the languid fellow. It sends a new thrill of energy through the body—fills it with the desire to do, to achieve. It rids the system of disease without the use of drugs or medicine, clears the mind of dependency—makes the world look brighter and life more worth living for.

I Guarantee Immediate Results

I guarantee to improve you physically and mentally. If you will follow my directions. It makes no difference where you live, what your present condition is or what has brought you to it. You can follow out my course without interfering in any way with your present occupation in the privacy of your own bedchamber if you like.

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Send for my FREE BOOK, "Promotion and Conservation of Health, Strength, and Mental Energy."

Send for it TODAY—Right NOW

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Mr. Lionel Strongfort, Dept. 143, Newark, N. J. Personal—Please send me your book "PROMOTION AND CONSERVATION OF HEALTH, STRENGTH AND MENTAL ENERGY," for postage of which I enclose a 10c piece (one dime).

Send me special information on subjects marked X below, without in any way obligating me.

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| ...Headache | ...Short Wind | ...Constipation | ...Increased Height |
| ...Thinness | ...Flat Feet | ...Dependancy | ...Muscular Development |
| ...Rupture | ...Biliousness | ...Impotency | ...Advanced Course |
| ...Lumbago | ...Torpid Liver | ...Poor Memory | ...Healthy Children |
| ...Neuritis | ...Indigestion | ...Rheumatism | ...Round Shoulder |
| ...Deformity (Describe) | ...Weak Eyes | | |

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Age Occupation
Street
City State

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WELL GROOMED MEN
CHOOSE THEIR OWN
TIME, PLACE AND
STYLE—CUT THEIR
OWN HAIR WITH A

COWAN Master Barber HAIR CUTTER

Simple as A B C

through your hair. Done in a few minutes. Time saved—lots of money too, at the price for hair cuts nowadays. You ought to see some of the letters we get from people who said it "couldn't be done" and are now convinced that it can be done.



Write for particulars and prices of this great invention in use three years by over 10,000 men, boys and mothers. Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money refunded.

Agents and Dealers Wanted

Cowan Hair-Cutter Co.
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NO MONEY DOWN

2 CREDIT \$2 A MONTH

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Elgin, Waltham, Howard, Illinois or any watch you want. Easy Payments and 30 days Free Trial. Send for Big

FREE CATALOG

112 pages wonderful values, diamonds, watches, rings, jewelry, up-to-date. Write for it. Write now. We will send you the money. Get posted, write today.

ALFRED WARE CO., Dept. 292 St. Louis, Mo.

FREE \$20

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Ukulele, Hawaiian Guitar, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Cornet or Banjo

Wonderful new system of teaching notes made by mail. "First pupils in each locality, we give a \$20 superb Violin, Mandolin, Ukulele, Guitar, Hawaiian Guitar, Cornet, Tenor Banjo or Banjo absolutely free. Very small charge for lessons only. We guarantee success or no charge. Complete outfit free. Write now. No obligation."

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A BRILLIANT CORRAIN GEM—GOLD-SET

on ten days' FREE TRIAL

Glittering, alluring, 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 karat jewels. You will be able to trace their charm. If you or your friends can distinguish this gem from the genuine, you can send it back to us and have your money refunded.

Our selling plan is simple and convenient. We send you the ring prepaid. You deposit \$5.25 with your postman, then put the ring on your finger. After ten days, when you decide to keep it, send us \$2.50 per month for five months.

Write us today, sending your finger size and tell us which of these solid gold rings illustrated above,—ladies' or men's you want.

M. LOWEY, Dept. 210, 301 30th Street, Woodliff, N. J.

"HANES"—the national nameplate on underwear is an unfailing guide!



ELASTIC KNIT
UNDERWEAR

BUY "Hanes" winter underwear for men on the strict business basis of the most unusual quality, comfort and service ever sold at the price! Buy "Hanes" with your eyes shut, or over the phone—buy it without the slightest inspection, if need be, *because*

Every garment bearing the "Hanes" national nameplate returns in wear and in absolute satisfaction far more than you pay for it—more than you ever before got out of an undergarment! Our guarantee is your safeguard. *It proves our faith in "Hanes"!*

"HANES" underwear is made in heavy weight and medium weight Union Suits and heavy weight Shirts and Drawers. (Illustrated in this advertisement.) The new medium weight Union Suit, carrying the *yellow* label, has been added to meet the demand of indoor men. It is made of full combed yarn and silk trimmed.

"Hanes" for Boys

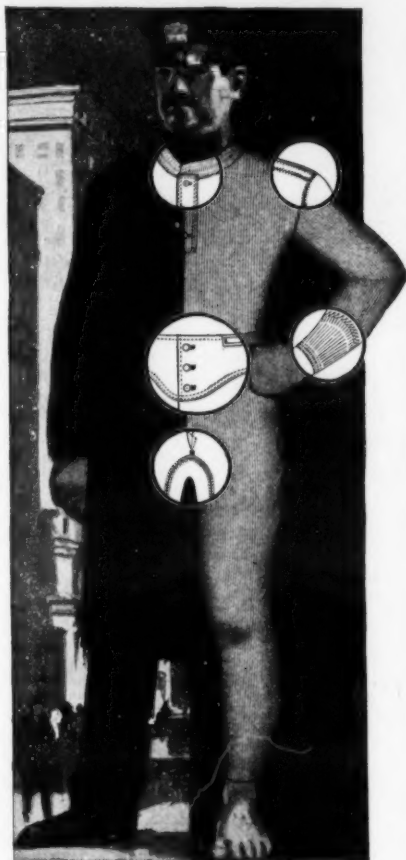
Buy "Hanes" Union Suits for boys if you seek more warmth and more wear than you ever bought before. This extra-value underwear duplicates the men's Union Suits in all important features with added fleeciness that appeals so much to the boys—and to mothers!

Made in sizes 20 to 34, covering ages 2 to 16 years. Two to four year old sizes have drop seat. Four desirable colors.

See "Hanes" underwear at your dealer's. If he cannot supply you, write us immediately.

P. H. HANES KNITTING CO.
Winston-Salem, N. C.

New York Office, 366 Broadway



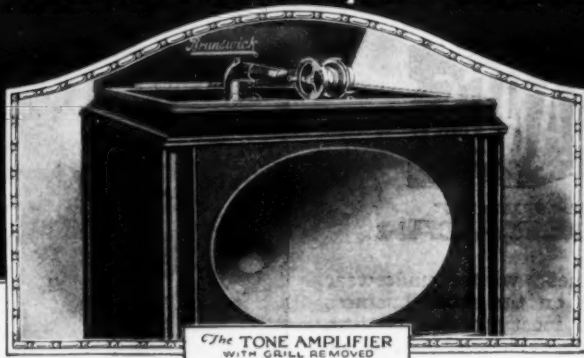
Read Hanes Guarantee

"We guarantee Hanes Underwear absolutely—every thread, stitch and button. We guarantee to return your money or give you a new garment if any seam breaks."

Next Summer—You'll want to wear Hanes Nainsook Union Suits!

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The Brunswick Method of Reproduction



The Importance of the Tone Amplifier

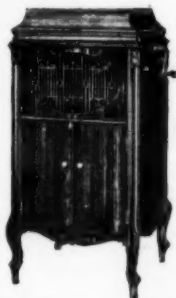
NO matter how perfect a reproducing apparatus might be, much of the beauty of the tone produced would be lost unless the tone chamber amplified the tone in just the proper way.

Sound waves spread in a circle according to basic laws of acoustics, and if any of these laws are violated a confusion and blurring of tones result.

The Brunswick Tone Amplifier conforms to very definite principles of acoustics which were not fully understood in old-time methods of reproduction.

It is built entirely of wood, moulded in a peculiar shape, the process being exclusive with The Brunswick.

By reason of the Ultona, a counter-balanced reproducer which plays *all makes of records* without any adjustment, except a turn of the wrist, the whole world of recorded music is yours when you own a Brunswick.



**Hear The Brunswick—
then judge for yourself**

Visit a Brunswick shop before you make your phonograph decision.

Hear also Brunswick Records—fitting companions of the Brunswick Phonograph. They can be played on any phonograph with steel or fibre needles.

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General Offices: 623-633 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago

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Brunswick
PHONOGRAPHS AND RECORDS

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"Take it from Father!"

A Durham-Duplex Razor! Handsomely finished—durable—useful! No gift from a father to a son could be more sensible.

Father is thoroughly familiar with the wonderful shaving qualities of the oil-tempered, hollow-ground, double-edged Durham-Duplex blades.

"Take it from him" that when he gives you a Durham-Duplex, he gives you not only a nifty Christmas present but a lifelong guarantee of shaving comfort.

Standard Set One Dollar Complete. Razor with attractive American ivory handle, safety guard and package of three Durham-Duplex blades (6 shaving edges) all in handsome American ivory case.

Christmas Model Two Dollars. Same as above but with gold plated blade holder and safety guard.

Other Sets up to \$12.

Additional Blades 50c for a package of 5

DURHAM-DUPLEX RAZOR CO., Jersey City, New Jersey

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The Present of the moment

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

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Men, Women and
Children

Easy to Buy
Easy to Send
A joy to Receive

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